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The Pacific

SPECTATOR

WANTED: AN AMERICAN
POLICY IN THE MIDDLE
EAST

Max Weston Thornburg

THE NEW SOVIET
CHALLENGE IN ASIA

Harold H. Fisher

Also

ALBERT GUÉRARD, CHARLES CHILD WALCUTT

A. E. COPPARD, GEORGE BLUESTONE

AUTUMN 1956

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THE PACIFIC SPECTATOR

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THE PACIFIC SPECTATOR *will cease publication with this issue, the last number of its tenth volume.*

The reasons for our demise are those which plague all quarterly magazines: steadily rising costs and the recurrent difficulties of securing the annual amounts needed to cover the deficits. The unfortunate fact is that no magazine of relatively small circulation, appealing only to those who want to think while they read, can exist today without regular subsidies for publication. Ten years, statistically, is a long life for such journals. We round out our decade feeling as intellectually alive as ever, but we bow to whatever economic laws govern the rise and fall of the intelligent printed word. And we have for sale, as no longer needed, one pulmotor and one cyclone cellar, somewhat used.

Nevertheless, it has been a happy life; there is no moaning at the bar. Although we say good-bye to our friends with regret, we are proud to have known them and to have had them as companions on a very exciting journey. We are grateful to the many educational institutions who have sponsored us, to the two foundations who helped us at critical times, and particularly to our subscribers, whose steady expressions of faith and good will we treasure.

The spectacle will remain, but the Spectator who viewed it lies down to pleasant dreams, with the sense that it was good to have lived.

The Editors

THE PACIFIC

A JOURNAL OF

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WANTED: AN AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

by Max Weston Thornburg

THE Middle East, from Iran and Turkey down to Egypt and neighboring North African Arab lands, is slowly but surely reaching a bursting point. When it does it may be recognized as a proper subject for firm and constructive American policy. We are good at reconstruction work—where the Communists don't beat us to it—because it takes what we are famous for, money and technology. With the many years' head start we have over the Communists in this critically important area, we may still be the ones, instead of the Communists, who help to put it back together minus some of the disruptive and hate-engendering forces that are now building up the bursting pressure. We cannot be sure of this, however, for the Communists very evidently have given it high priority on their own program, and during this past year they have opened new political, psychological, and economic fronts there, which already have put us on the defensive.

Even better than bidding for the reconstruction job, of course, would be a firm and constructive American policy right now, aimed at relieving the most dangerous tensions and gradually ameliorating the conditions that produced them. This course might still avert the blow-up, and while the time left for it is getting short, the Middle East works on a slower timetable than we do in the West, and social cataclysms, like social advancement programs, take longer to mature than we of the West ordinarily suppose. This is in our favor, but only if we take advantage of it.

We Americans are not likely to adopt such a firm and constructive policy toward the Middle East, partly because we are so busy with our own affairs, particularly in an election year. Moreover, the conditions and issues that produce the turbulence in those far-away countries (though less than twenty-four hours away by com-

mercial airliner from New York) are too obscure for easy after-dinner conversation, and with everything else they have on their minds, the rank and file of our policy makers are not likely to be worried by anything that does not worry the public.

A large part of the obscurity which beclouds Middle East affairs, except as increasingly frequent acts of violence or of Soviet activity break through to our press and radio, is due to the pre-occupation of our public opinion with the running controversy, highlighted by occasional gunfire, between Israel and the Arabs. If this could be settled, the common idea goes, all would be well in the Middle East. *How* it might be settled remains a perplexity, but each move in that direction, such as United Nations' Hammerskjold's recent success in bringing about a cease-fire agreement, adds some substance to our hope that it will be settled eventually.

Actually, it would not be misleading to say that if the Arab-Israeli conflict were settled tomorrow—in the only sense that has practical meaning, namely a settlement that would preclude further bloodshed and re-establish normal trade relations—we would still be faced with something like 95 per cent of the Middle East conflicts that now threaten to tear that region apart, with the loss of vitally important Western interests, leaving it wide open for the Communists to move into.

How many of the conflicts that have made at least momentary headlines from that part of the world during the past few years have had their origin in, or indeed any connection at all with, the Arab-Israeli dispute, with the exception of the actual shooting war between the Jews and the Arabs for a short period following partition? The Mossadegh rebellion in Iran, which cost England its oil concession and nearly delivered Iran to the Tudeh (Communist) party, did not. The rebellion against the French in Morocco and Algeria, which now involves nearly the whole Arab world at least as to principle, did not. The rift between the northern and southern countries of the Middle East arising over the Baghdad Pact—which was serious enough to deter us from joining the Pact after being instrumental in its creation—did not. The ejection of British authority, symbolized by Glubb Pasha, from Jordan did not; nor did their

earlier ejection from the Suez Canal Zone. The British-Greek-Turkish conflict in Cyprus did not. The shooting riots and demands for popular representation in government in Bahrain—for many years regarded as a model Arab community—did not. Nor did the current riots in Aden and the Hadhramout, nor the heated and sometimes bloody disputes over unsettled boundaries, nor the rivalries between historic Arab dynasties, such as between King Saud and the traditionally hostile Hashemite kings of Iraq and Jordan; nor did the contests between the Western oil companies and the Middle East governments—a contest for survival on the oil companies' part; nor did the struggles for autonomous existence by the principal minorities of the region, such as the three-million-strong Kurdish "nation," which is now divided among five member countries of the United Nations.

Even the most recently headlined problems—Egypt's negotiations with the Soviets, and her move to nationalize the Suez Canal—cannot be regarded simply as a result of Arab-Israeli conflict. To do so ignores, in these instances as in the preceding ones, three fundamental conflicts in the Middle East: first, the rising clamor of 100 million oppressed, undernourished, diseased, and illiterate people for relief from their historical misery and despair; second, the rivalries of politically ambitious leaders who promise much but thus far have been too busy with their personal problems of political survival to tackle the basic ills of their countries; and third, the diverse self-interests of foreign powers, the most recent manifestation of which has been the appearance of Soviet Communists as open contestants for political, strategic, and economic predominance in the Middle East.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Israeli-Arab dispute, from the standpoint of our own national interest in the Middle East, has been its effect in at least partially blinding us to the existence of these other problems of the region, except as they force themselves upon our notice as isolated episodes requiring a gesture on our part, but scarcely warranting a considered policy.

This is not a criticism of our Foreign Service or other specialists in our government whose business it is to analyze conditions abroad.

American private citizens who have lived much in the Middle East will be the first to defend the expertness of many of our permanent government officials who have devoted their careers to analyzing just such problems as we are discussing here. But their function is to execute policy, seldom to make it.

If the countries of the Middle East ever stood in need of a firm and friendly guiding hand, the time is now. The awakening of many millions of long oppressed and suffering people to the belief that they don't have to be that way any longer, if they place themselves in the hands of their own leaders and throw off both their own traditionally tyrannical governments and the servitudes imposed by foreign powers, has faced the world in the Middle East, as it has elsewhere, with a mighty force capable of either great achievement or vast destruction, depending upon how it is led. The progressive lessening of British authority and influence within the region since the war has left the new leaders not only free from historical restraints but, as a reaction to those restraints, disposed to excessive demonstrations of their newly found freedom.

Quite generally over the Middle East, what has happened is that the older despotic governments have been thrown out and replaced by new leaders who have emerged from the people, but thus far the exchange has achieved mainly new conflicts growing out of internal and external rivalries that have left little room for the basic reforms at which the revolutions presumably were aimed.

In most cases, these new leaders can fairly be credited with honest intentions to carry forward the programs of "Westernization" which quite clearly have become the aim of the progressive elements in all the Middle East countries. But "Westernization" is more than the random application of Western technologies and the superficial adoption of Western forms of parliamentary government and popular elections. A sense of voluntary discipline—the acceptance of new codes of conduct and a new sense of social justice—is also an essential ingredient of the Western civilizations to which these newly emerging nations of the Middle East are now looking for guidance. Without a much better pattern than has yet been provided for them, however, there is little chance that these contesting leaders, each

intent upon his own political survival by whatever means comes to his hand, will reach anything like the same conclusions as to how the benefits of "Westernization"—or such of them as those peoples choose to combine into their own cultures—can best be brought about.

"Self-determination" has a certain virtue as a principle of national development, but has little realistic application to any of the Middle East countries today, with the exception, only recently, of Turkey, where after thirty years of preparation, bipartisan elections are beginning to make it possible for the people to express their own determination concerning particular national issues. Elsewhere, it means determination by whatever political leader is on top at the moment.

The Middle East, counting from Iran and Turkey on the north to Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula on the south, is roughly the same area as the United States, but contains ten independent nations besides an indeterminate number of semi-independent sheikdoms (a recent report puts this at more than fifty). In these circumstances, even an ardent liberalist might shudder at the prospect of depending upon "self-determination" to produce conditions under which regional peace would be possible. In any case, no violence would be done to that principle by making it possible for the people to know, when they exercise their right of self-determination, what they are choosing between. Indeed, unless they know this, the principle loses its validity.

Here is where a *United States policy* would serve one of its most valuable purposes, by stating clearly what the American position is in respect of each one of the main sources of conflict in the Middle East, and what it is prepared to do about it, at least in principle.

Despite the increasing hostility toward us—and in the self-serving tactics of Middle East political leaders we may very soon replace Britain and Israel as symbols of foreign intrusion—America is still regarded as the sole Western power without "imperial" or "colonial" aspirations. A comprehensive declaration of our intentions in each situation that concerns us in the Middle East, and a clear statement as to the circumstances in which we are prepared to take

actions of various kinds—whether in defense of our own national interests or those of others, or to give economic and technical assistance, or for other foreseeable purposes—would at least provide a pattern of American principles as applied to Middle East circumstances at which no charge of imperialism could justly be leveled, and which would allow the leaders and peoples of the Middle East to decide for themselves whether to orient their courses with ours or to pursue separate ones of their own.

When no one, even in the United States, is able to define American intentions in the Middle East, and when actual examination of our actions there produces contradictory conclusions as to what principles guide us in meeting one critical situation after another, it can scarcely be expected that either the political leaders or the people themselves will know, from issue to issue, where we stand. And without confidence in our intentions and in our constancy of action, there is little in our performance for them to turn to, either for guidance or for shelter from the dangers they fear. We blow hot and cold on British policies, and on French, and on the Baghdad Pact, and on the Cyprus question, and on economic aid, and on various facets of the Israeli controversy, and on boundary disputes, and on practically every other issue that has concerned us in the Middle East—except the threat of communism, which rightly or wrongly is one of the least of the worries of the Middle East peoples themselves. It is small wonder that the Middle East political leaders approach each new issue with us as a new contest, unrelated to principles or to general policy, and with a determination to win as much as possible through any means possible. Small wonder, also, that our influence has done so little to orient and to unify their bewildered efforts toward the adoption of Western concepts.

In these episodic contests with the Middle East leaders we have lost ground instead of gaining it, partly because we have not built toward a well-defined pattern of principles, and partly because the piecemeal concessions won from us have had the cumulative effect of strengthening the feeling in the Middle East that in these issue-by-issue contests we are irresolute when confronted by a strongly pressed demand or a threat.

We seem not to have learned that, particularly among the Arab peoples, strength is respected and weakness disdained. Typically, a concession made in response to a demand is not regarded by them as a step toward the equalization of a mutual relationship as it is in the West, but as a sign of weakness inviting further exploitation. American oil companies operating in the Middle East are familiar with this trait.

This traditional philosophy of take-what-you-can-get was born of age-old necessity among these peoples, but with it is a deeply rooted respect for strength and authority. The take-what-you-can-get process ends when it is met by a voice strong enough to say, "This much, but no more." If the voice speaks with the same authority to protect as to admonish, there is the combination that made such kings as Ibn Saud, and such national leaders as Ataturk. There is the combination, too, that would make an American policy based upon it understood and respected in the Middle East.

This is not at all to suggest a "get tough" policy. Nothing could be less suited to the Middle East, where guidance and confidence that they are on the right road is what is needed. Confidence is engendered by fairness and firmness; indecision and caprice destroy it.

How can we go about formulating a "firm and constructive" policy which would serve as a basis for faith in us and at least moderate the worst sources of conflict in the Middle East?

Certainly, the first step must be to recognize the real causes of the troubles. After that we can determine which of our policy-implementing instruments—political, military, economic, technical, cultural, and psychological—are best suited for accomplishing particular objectives, and see that they are applied effectively. We will find that economic instruments, for example, must be applied to produce political consequences, or psychological consequences, depending upon what is the "critical requirement" at the moment. Or, political instruments may be required to reach economic objectives. Not only must the right instrument be chosen, but also the right criteria for guiding its application.

A closer examination of the three important sources of conflict mentioned earlier will at least suggest how such a policy may be found.

Popular Rebelliousness

The roots of this region-wide rebelliousness in the Middle East, as in other backward areas, lie in what Professor Millikan of M.I.T. has referred to as "the almost unbelievable gulf between the urban classes and the countryside." Until this gulf between the two extremes has at least begun to close from both sides, no stability can be foreseen in the Middle East. Either the region will burst under the pressures of its conflicts, or the people will turn to some other and more promising leadership.

Bridging this gulf requires action that is both psychological and material. From the government's side must come an awareness of responsibility and a dedication to public service manifested in steadily improving administration and utilization of national resources in the public interest. From the peoples' side must come increasing confidence in both the intentions and the capacity of their governments, and increasing efforts on their own parts to improve their circumstances.

Our policy, therefore, must deal simultaneously with the two extremes represented by the small group holding most of the wealth and power, and the mass of the population holding neither. There is no "middle class" as we know it in the West.

Closing the gap from the peoples' side involves programs of material improvement which are familiar to Americans through the publicity which has been given to our Point Four activities, and need not be discussed in detail here. The essential requirements are that it be prompt, because hope unfulfilled gives way to despair; that it be widespread, because it must touch the lives of a large part of the population; that it be adequate to produce at least the minimum effect at which it is aimed; and that it be simple, in order that it may be assimilated by people whose own ways of life are not prepared for complex technical innovations.

While social improvement must be prompt, it by no means

follows that it must be rapid. As stated earlier, the Middle East's timetable is much slower than our own, and many of our Point Four failures have been due to our disregard of this fact. The fundamental changes which our policy must aim at bringing about will become enduring only as men's thinking about them changes, and the great changes in the way men think come between the way a man thinks and the way his son is brought up to think. The long program of changes that must take place in these countries is, therefore, to be marked off in generations rather than in years. To keep hope fresh, improvement must be continuous, but it must not exceed the rate at which a long-established society can adjust itself to new conditions.

Merely to provide a government with economic and technical aid, even though this results in statistical evidence of increased production within the country, might, in fact, widen the gulf between the privileged group who get most of the benefits and the masses who get little. From this point of view, one of the early objectives of our policy must be to encourage the development of governments, whatever their form, that are prepared to dedicate themselves to public service, and to assist them in increasing their capacity to perform such service.

The material evidence of improving conditions, and the increasing confidence in the government that produces this improvement, will combine to bring about the psychological change in the minds of the people that is an early essential to regional security.

Rivalries Among the Leaders

Closing the economic and social gulf from the *government* side, necessary for the reasons just indicated, presents a more complex problem and one that has received too little attention.

The new leaders in whose hands Middle East guidance has now largely been placed are not, for the most part, anointed successors in established hierarchies, but strong men who have emerged from the people and contest with rivals for leadership. Typically, before they can turn their attention to the internal ills which evoked this

widespread revolutionary movement, they must secure their own positions as leaders, which, in countries that are not ready for the democratic processes we know in the West, means attaining undisputed authority. Thus, the first results of the revolution are exchanges of despotisms for new conflicts among rival leaders. The price of political survival among Middle East leaders comes high, as can be seen in some of the defiant attitudes and actions taken by them for no other explainable reason than to exhibit their capacity for leadership by challenging the world to single combat. Egypt's Nasser is an example.

In the Middle East, no issue is more effective for closing up breaches on the home front, or more ready at hand for that purpose, than one involving foreign intrusion. On such an issue, all can join hands. Middle East history is a history of foreign invasions and servitudes, and, with a new hope of freedom burning among the people, no champion who can exploit a new foreign threat will be without a following. For some years the British took the brunt of this—until it was shared with Israel. Our time is coming.

Rivalries in the Middle East, with their exploitation of xenophobia, are by no means limited to the home political front. Historically, many other groupings than those fixed by modern political boundaries—racial, tribal, religious—had their own leaders with rival aspirants for succession. Many of these still exist, with strong uniting bonds, if not as corporate bodies. They are represented by the minorities, tribal organizations, and Islam itself. Other similar unions—such as the Moslem Brotherhood and the Arab League—have coalesced in more recent times for certain common purposes. We, ourselves, have had a part in creating a still newer one—in the Baghdad Pact. But it seems to be clear that, at least for the present, the Middle East is crystallizing into independent elements chiefly under the influence of the complex phenomenon we call “nationalism.”

Nationalism has been variously defined, and variously attributed to objective geographical, political, and cultural factors; to subjective herd instincts; and to the pattern of social communications among peoples. But however it may be defined, it manifests

itself in the Middle East in the increasing tendency of these nations (most of them arbitrarily created for Britain's political purposes after World War I) to back into their own holes and pull the hole in behind them.

This astringent force of "nationalism" operates without regard to economic viability, security against aggression, or consciousness of the comity of nations. Nationalism, in the extreme form that is developing today, intensifies hostility between neighbors and is one of the reasons for the failure up to now of the highly nationalistic Arab countries to form an effective union of their own.

The success of American and British efforts in unifying the "northern tier" countries (Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and Pakistan) under the Baghdad Pact was good medicine for the ills produced by nationalism, but the bonds of this union were woven out of the fear of Soviet aggression, and recent Soviet tactics now threaten to dissolve these bonds through ostensibly friendly collaboration. Whether we can provide new bonds, in time, out of the more durable materials of common economic and technical interests and the promulgation of common social and cultural concepts remains to be seen. The raw materials are there in abundance to work on.

From this point of view, an aid policy aimed at *regional* projects which necessarily require joint action among the nations affected would have far greater results in terms of regional stability than would any number of separate country projects that produce jealousies and intensify nationalistic rivalries. The range of possibilities is wide, and includes irrigation and flood control works, highways, regional development banks, power systems, the promotion of customs and immigration control unions, co-operative programs for agricultural and livestock improvement and for public health measures, and educational institutions based upon specialized facilities in the different countries.

To close the gulf from the government side, therefore, our policy should aim at strengthening the positions of the political leaders who have that same aim, thus making it less necessary for them to marshal the cohering forces of xenophobia and nationalism behind them, and at unifying the efforts of nations toward their common

goal of social advancement by strongly supporting projects than en-gender regional collaboration.

Self-Interest of Foreign Powers

Every major power has interests of some kind in almost every other part of the world, but to admit this does not connote imperialistic designs. Our own interests in the Middle East, both strategic and economic, are of vast importance to us, and considerations of their security are quite properly a part of our policy. Foreign powers also have interests there, and inevitably some of them will be in opposition to some of ours. In the long run, the best security for our interests in the Middle East will be to have those countries as strong and friendly allies. Within that context, differences between our interests can always be ironed out.

Only three of the many policy problems arising out of foreign interests in the Middle East will be mentioned here.

First, a recent manifestation of such an interest, and certainly a disturbing one at the moment, is the appearance of the Soviets as open contestants for political, strategic, and economic domination there. Their offers of military and economic aid to all the Middle East governments have been widely publicized, but it is less well known that even more recently they have launched a flanking movement around the governments that refused such proposals by making offers of economic and technical assistance, on seemingly attractive terms, directly to private firms and individuals. As this is done openly and in compliance with relevant laws of the country, it falls outside the area in which official policy normally determines events; and while responsible political leaders are aware that such an operation might quickly lead to Soviet penetration that could not easily be controlled, few of them are secure enough in their own political positions to risk the local resentment of those who might profit from such a deal, that would follow government action to bar it. Turkey was the first to be faced with this proposition, after refusing a government-to-government offer of Soviet aid, and because of Turkey's present economic crisis and the government's precarious political position, its dilemma is a serious one.

Here is a case where a threatening foreign interest could be opposed effectively by beating the Communists to it. The aid so sorely needed by Turkish private enterprises is for simple supplies and moderate credits, both of which the Soviets can furnish easily. Costly and long-term projects, like the Aswan Dam in Egypt, are not likely to be snatched up by the Communists until their domination of the region is far better assured, but we can expect aggressive competition from them in the field of simple and widespread aid operations of kinds that will quickly win popular favor. If we dissipate our aid resources by spreading them too thinly, or by devoting large parts to costly long-range projects that have little value in producing prompt changes in the causes of Middle East unrest, we must not be surprised if those peoples express their "self-determination" in favor of the Soviets who use their own aid resources with better effect.

Second, the frequently heard statement that our aid to backward countries should be given "without strings attached" warrants challenging before the loose thinking that this cliché represents becomes any more general than it is now. Clearly, there must be definable purposes back of our aid programs, and those responsible for achieving these purposes would be remiss if they failed to administer the program in such a way as to produce the results intended. Failure to realize these results frequently has been due to corruption among officials or others within the receiving country, or to the lack of local agencies competent to deal with the types of problems that arise in connection with the aid, or to the diversion of the aid to purposes other than those for which it was given. Stipulations and checks which have been devised to minimize waste or misuse of our aid are so obviously warranted as to make defense of that principle unnecessary.

On the other hand, to attach conditions in the nature of a servitude to us, for example by requiring the receiving country to agree to some obligation of a military or political nature in direct return for our aid, is another matter. Quite generally, this should be avoided—not, from the policy maker's point of view, because it is immoral, but because a concession gained in this manner lays us

open to the charge of "power politics" and destroys the confidence which it is a chief aim of our aid program to build.

The principle to which we should adhere is that our aid offers must have such "strings attached" as are necessary for reasonable assurance that the intended benefits will be realized by the receiving country, but that our own compensation for giving that aid will come from the success of our policy for building strong and friendly allies. From the standpoint of our foreign policy, unless this latter possibility exists, the aid should be withheld. It has not always been.

Third, inasmuch as Britain is and probably will continue to be our principal ally, and because British interests and influence have played and continue to play so important a part in the affairs of the Middle East, our policy toward those countries must have a close and well-understood relationship to British policy. This is not to say that we should blindly follow British policy or compromise any of the principles that we believe are essential as testimony of American intentions. It does mean that we should recognize that Britain has interests in the Middle East that are as valid as our own; that because of differences in our national situations those interests may require certain policies different from ours; and that there should be a clear understanding between us as to where our common interests enable a common policy, and where, for particular reasons, our policies must differ or even conflict. From the standpoint of uniting our efforts where they can be united, it is almost as helpful to know *where and why* we differ as it would be not to differ at all.

Historically, if Britain had not established herself in the Middle East as the dominant external influence, France, Germany, or Russia would have succeeded in their long-continued efforts to do so. It was in the shelter of that British-established order that we ourselves became participants in the affairs of the region. It now appears that we are taking over from Britain the major burden of guiding and assisting the new nations of the Middle East, mainly for the purpose of keeping the Communists from doing it. The British, nevertheless, are still deeply involved, not only strategically and economically in the region as a whole, but also in the actual administration of the many semiautonomous sheikdoms that have not

yet been organized into states capable of independent existence in the modern world.

In respect of the principal Middle East nations, it is fortunate for us that we are taking up this burden at a stage in their development which requires from us mainly guidance in the establishment of the Western institutions to which they themselves aspire, as well as material aid and techniques which we are well able to provide. The circumstance that our own nation is a largely self-contained empire relieves us from most of the onerous necessities that faced Britain, as a colonial empire, and produced the animosities that still linger in the Middle East.

Even in our role, however, the necessity remains for safeguarding our national interests by distinguishing between political conduct in the Middle East which will promote regional security and that which will not; as well as for patient firmness in demonstrating the principles upon which Western ideas of social justice rest. These are the principles that should stand out boldly in our declaration of Middle East policy, as the new guides for the new nations now preparing to take their places in the world. Even here, our intentions are bound to be misjudged and misrepresented, and aspirants for political power will howl us down as foreign intruders; but most will believe us if we make our intentions known and support them with the testimony of our actions.

Not all the political divisions in this politically fragmented quarter of the world are yet ready for independent existence as "nations," and it is here that the accord between British policy and our own may meet its severest test. Our view is likely to be that even in the coastal sheikdoms under British protection—the least advanced of the backward countries—the concepts toward which the more advanced Middle East nations are striving should be cultivated more vigorously than in the past. These more primitive states, too, must know what American policy is in the Middle East, and ought not to find it in any fundamental conflict with the British policy under which their own development is proceeding.

Since we are not prepared to accept, nor the British to concede, administrative responsibility for those sheikdoms (most of them

barely identified by tribal leaders' names), the problems of political amalgamation, boundary definition, governing procedure, social and economic development, and both internal and external security must remain with the British, but concern us as problems of joint policy. In a region already tensed with historical antagonisms which are now aggravated by external interests in military strategy, oil fields, and social ideologies, there should be few differences as to what the West stands for.

And so, we come back to where we started. We must make up our minds.

We have reviewed here some of the causes of Middle East unrest, particularly the three most important ones: rebelliousness of the masses against misery and despair; rivalries of emerging leaders and their exploitation of xenophobia and nationalism; and foreign self-interests in the region.

There can be no question but that the people of the Middle East and their leaders, generally speaking, are determined to win for themselves freedom to enjoy the achievements of modern civilization, or such of them as they choose to combine with their own far older cultures. Just at the time that they are struggling to organize themselves into a new pattern of living, we Americans are extending our own ideas and activities over much of the world, primarily for the purpose of making it possible for us to go on living as we want to in our own country.

These two new movements in world history, theirs and ours, are now meeting in the Middle East.

For theirs there can be no distinct pattern yet, because they are still in the stage of trial and error, and neither the popular champions who are contesting for leadership, nor the new ideas that are contesting for acceptance, have yet succeeded in winning the full confidence of the people.

There is no such reason, however, why the pattern of our own intentions and procedures cannot be stated clearly, not to compel obedience, but to enable understanding, and to provide guidance for those who choose to lay their course with ours.

This is why there should be an American policy for the Middle East.

Until we make up our minds what it is, and declare it simply and firmly, the unnecessary disorder of our own behavior will only multiply and further confuse the understandable disorder which comes from the struggles of these ancient countries to throw off a thousand years of old ways and find new ways to take their places.

It is as fatal as it is cowardly to blink facts because they are not to our taste.

—JOHN TYNDALL

THE NEW SOVIET CHALLENGE IN ASIA

by Harold H. Fisher

THE 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union did a number of other things besides destroying the image of Stalin as the universal genius and infallible leader. It also confirmed the Party's intention to continue to use the tactics advertised by the journeys of Khrushchev, and Bulganin's to Yugoslavia, China, and South Asia, tactics characterized by such expressions as "peaceful coexistence," "business-like relations between nations," "economic and technical aid," a "zone of peace" to include both Communist and non-Communist countries, and the slogan "Let us trade" instead of the slogan "Let us arm," attributed to the West. The new Communist leaders appear to believe that the West is incapable of comprehending the significance of the new course or of overcoming the rivalries and contradictions of capitalism in order to oppose it.

Some months after the Communist 20th Congress the President and the Congress of the United States created special commissions to look into the whole matter of foreign aid in relation to American foreign policy in general. The President said that part of the mission of his Foreign Economic Council was the "development of foreign economic policies and programs designed to meet the special problems created by Communist activities in underdeveloped areas of the free world."

There are several reasons for all this investigative activity. The American people and their representatives in the Congress are confused by the complexities of the problems as well as by the tactics of the Communists. Many inside and outside of Congress realize that the diplomatic, military, and economic aid programs that have worked well in Europe have not been working so well in Asia and the Middle East. We have built a system of mutual de-

fense alliances from Korea and Japan in the east to Turkey in the west. We have spent a great deal of money on foreign aid, the greater part of it for military purposes. For example, for the current fiscal year (1957) the President proposed to spend \$2.35 billion in Asia. Of this, \$2.05 billion would be for military expenses and only \$303 million for economic aid. Policies reflected by such an allocation of funds seem better shaped to meet the Communist tactics of 1948-50 than those of 1956. Moreover, these policies, it now appears, were not well designed to give the most effective help in solving the problems of economic growth which the Asian peoples so urgently need and want. According to United Nations estimates the real income per person in most of these Asian countries is less than before the war and is falling farther behind instead of catching up with that in advanced countries. Spending more dollars to enlarge the present program won't solve the problem. The present program appears not to have taken into account all the factors in the Asian situation that the Communists have taken great pains to consider in shaping their new course.

A writer in the Chatham House review, *The World Today* (May 1956), has summed up the Asian aspect of the Soviet Communists' new course in these words: "The Soviet leaders have shifted course in order to align the U.S.S.R. with Asian aspirations and Asian needs, that is with the Asian evolutionary process."

Before we consider what are these Asian aspirations and needs with which the Soviet Union has now become aligned, we should take note of the fact that the new course was not the result of Stalin's death and the installation of a new deal in the Kremlin. Soviet policy began to move along the new course six months or perhaps a year before Stalin died. The chief causes for the change, in my opinion, were not changes in Soviet leadership, but recognition by the Soviet hierarchy of the significance in world politics of the atomic stalemate, and, secondly, a realization that the revolutionary international class war policy was no longer winning victories for communism but was causing the growing opposition to organize and unite in self-defense. Once Soviet policy makers had embarked on the new course and once Stalin was out of the way, the

program picked up speed and momentum. The "collective" leaders, who had been Stalin's compliant "yes" men, have attempted to escape responsibility for past mistakes and emphasize the soundness and benevolence of the new course by invoking the spirit of Lenin and by violent denunciation of their last master. Relieved of his sinister presence, the leaders who now operate the apparatus of the Soviet dictatorship have watered down the once revered dogma of the inevitable war and have conceded the possibility of Communist victory both in the international sphere and in individual countries through peaceful political and economic competition. These doctrinal shifts make it easier for many non-Communists, particularly Asians, to look upon the new course, not as a tricky tactical maneuver, but as a new policy with which it is not only safe but advantageous to co-operate in order to realize Asian aspirations and meet Asian needs.

Since Asia includes at least three major cultural communities and a great number of smaller ones, how can one speak of the aspirations and needs of Asia? One can do so because in spite of the great cultural diversity of that continent, there are certain aspirations and needs that many Asians share. It will be convenient to group these common aspirations and needs in four, somewhat overlapping categories—(1) Nationalism, (2) Equality, (3) Development, and (4) Peace—and to look at the new Soviet policies with respect to these categories and at some of the possible effects of these policies on the Communist movement in Asia.

I

Nationalism has acquired a bad name in the West. It is usually considered one of the chief causes of the two world wars of the twentieth century and of several lesser wars and other troubles that have beset the world during the last century and a half. But it means something very different to Asians. In his address before a joint meeting of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives, May 17, 1956, President Sukarno of Indonesia said that he hesitated to use the word "nationalism" because he understood that in many countries it was considered an out-of-date political

doctrine. But to Asians and Africans, he said, nationalism did not imply chauvinism or national superiority but was a young and progressive creed. This, of course, could be said of nationalism in the West in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. "For us," Sukarno explained, "nationalism means the rebuilding of our nations; it means the effort to provide equal esteem for our peoples; it means the determination to take the future into our own hands. For us, nationalism is the love of country and the determination to improve it. . . . for us of Asia and Africa, it is the mainspring of our efforts. Understand that and you have the key to much of postwar history. Fail to understand it, and no amount of thinking, no torrent of words, no Niagara of dollars will produce anything but bitterness and disillusionment. We ask you," he said, "to understand our national struggle and we ask you to sympathize with it. We ask you to understand and sympathize with the fact that our national struggle is still incomplete. How can it be complete when millions of our people in Asia and Africa are still under colonial domination, are still not free?"

Nationalism as understood by Sukarno and many other Asians covers a lot of ground. It includes much more than political independence. The leaders of the countries that have gained independence are not satisfied; they demand the right of self-determination for dependent peoples everywhere in the world. They not only call for an end to colonialism but they emphasize the danger that Asians may become the victims of a new colonialism through economic pressures and especially through military and economic aid agreements with political strings attached.

The Soviet Communists have supported most of these aspirations of Asian nationalism for many years. From Lenin's time on, the Communists have campaigned against colonialism and imperialism—except, of course, in the former Russian Empire—on the theory that the Asian peasants and the Western proletarians were equally the victims of capitalist exploitation and that if they joined forces against their exploiters, capitalism and imperialism would fall together. The communists supported the right of self-determination but with the frankly expressed reservation that this right

was subordinate in another right—the right of revolution. This meant that the Communists, both Soviet and local, would aid the Asian nationalists in their struggle for independence, but that during this struggle and after the victory had been won the Communists would carry on a revolutionary struggle in order to undermine and supplant the nationalists at the head of the newly independent states. In China and northern Indochina the Communists carried out this plan successfully; in the Philippines, Burma, India, Ceylon, Malaya, and Indonesia they tried and failed.

The new policy, which claims to have returned to the Leninist line, cannot abruptly repudiate this Leninist doctrine, but it has done so indirectly by promulgating the heretical theory that the Communists can gain control of the governments by peaceful competition with other parties, that is, by the ballot box instead of armed uprisings such as have been attempted in all East and South Asian countries except Japan. At the same time Soviet leaders have outdone themselves to flatter and honor such Asian nationalist leaders as Nehru and U Nu who until quite recently were always denounced as the "lackeys of capitalism" or the "running dogs of the imperialists."

II

Neutralism is a manifestation of Asian nationalism. It is gaining ground in Asia where Prime Minister Nehru has been its most influential but not its only advocate. When U Nu, then Prime Minister of Burma, visited the United States in 1955, he devoted one of his major speeches to this subject, comparing neutralism to the early American policy of "no entangling alliances." He argued that for Burma to join any collective security arrangement except the United Nations would mean loss of independence, less security, and an increase in the danger of subversion. He said that "in the present circumstances of Burma, her membership in any alliance with a great-power military bloc is incompatible with her continued existence as an independent state." Because of their experience, the people of Burma believe "an alliance with a big power immediately means domination by that power. It means loss of independence."

The new Russian Communist policies are aimed at convincing Asians and Africans all the way from the Sea of Japan to the Pillars of Hercules that neutralism is a means of preventing a new colonialism and of achieving peace and progress through the cultivation of peaceful coexistence of countries with different political, social and cultural institutions. This was not always so. Until the failure of the civil and guerrilla wars in Korea, India, Burma, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaya, the Communists, both Russian and Chinese, declared over and over again that the world was divided into two camps and only two—the camp of socialism, democracy, and progress (that being the Communist camp) and the camp of monopoly, capitalism, imperialism, and war. They denounced Nehru and other advocates of a “third way” of neutralism. “Those who are not for us,” said the Communists, “are against us.”

In accordance with this line Mao Tse-tung formulated his famous doctrine of “leaning to one side.” He said on July 1, 1949, that in order to win and consolidate the Communist victory the Chinese people must “lean to one side,” either to “the side of imperialism or to the side of socialism.” He went on to say that this was true, not only for the Chinese but for all peoples. “Neutrality is a mere camouflage and a third road does not exist.”

By the time the nineteenth Congress of the CPSU met in October 1952 the Communists had decided on new tactics. The rigid interpretation of the two-camp theory and the attacks on neutralism were being replaced by talk of creating a world-wide antiwar front, strengthening ties with all lovers of peace regardless of their camp and the promotion of international co-operation and economic relations with all countries. After Stalin’s death in March 1953, Soviet leaders denounced the cult of personality, moderated the asperities of their diplomacy, raised the iron curtain a little, and called for an end to the cold war and for the peaceful coexistence of communism and capitalism.

In 1954 the Communists effectively demonstrated their alignment with the growing sentiment of neutralism among Asian and African peoples by the joint proclamation of the “Five Principles

of Coexistence," the *Panch Shila*, by Nehru and Chou En-lai. The Five Principles were in substance included in the Ten Point Declaration signed by representatives of twenty-nine nations at the Bandung Conference (April 1955). The Russians claimed that these had always been Soviet principles and they underlined their agreement with them in the joint Bulganin-Nehru statement of June 22, 1955. From a tactical point of view it is significant that this declaration of principles was not made in Moscow but by two Asian prime ministers, one of whom was not a Communist.

Khrushchev, at the 20th Congress (February 1956), hailed what he called the transformation of socialism from the confines of one country into a world system as the principal feature of our epoch. And he claimed that this new socialist internationalism had brought onto the world stage a zone of peace, composed of Communist and non-Communist states with a population of almost one billion five hundred million persons. The Communists have made it quite clear that they hope to include in this peace zone all of Asia, including the Middle East plus North Africa. SEATO, NATO, the Baghdad pact, and all the other forty-two collective security pacts to which the United States is a party do not seem to give relevant answers to this new policy.

III

In identifying their policy with the aspirations of Asian nationalism, the new Russian leaders have also done their best to satisfy the Asians' wish to be treated as equals. The most spectacular demonstration of this intention was the much publicized pilgrimage of Khrushchev, as head of the CPSU, and Bulganin, as head of the Soviet Government, to four Asian countries—China, India, Burma, and Afghanistan. The very fact that the heads of the ruling party and the government of one of the world's most powerful countries took the time and trouble to make this pilgrimage was a friendly and complimentary gesture that gave the Asians great satisfaction. Khrushchev and Bulganin in their speeches told the Asians that Russia belongs to Asia because four-fifths of the area of the USSR lies in Asia. They said that the Soviet Union respected Asian cul-

tures and recognized the growing importance of Asia, which contains half the world's population, in world affairs and in world history.

Khrushchev and Bulganin did not, of course, neglect the old Soviet propaganda themes. They claimed that Asia's backwardness was due to Western colonial policies, that the Russian October Revolution had given colonialism a crushing blow and that the Chinese Communist victory had strengthened Asian independence. The Russians pointed with pride to the Soviet achievements in political, military, and social spheres and contrasted Russia's peaceful intentions with American alleged reluctance to halt the arms race and with the aggressive purposes of SEATO and the Baghdad Pact.

Thus, Soviet leaders have used deeds and words to persuade the Asians that an association with the Communists in the "zone of peace" has no political strings attached and is free from discrimination on the basis of either racial prejudice or imperial arrogance.

IV

When Soviet leaders call for an Asian solidarity, they are rephrasing a slogan that the Japanese imperialists used effectively and then degraded. The idea of "Asia for the Asians" was a popular expression of the new Asian nationalism that was gathering headway in the 1920's and 1930's against the colonial system and the assumptions of racial and cultural superiority of the West. Also, in offering economic and technical aid and state-directed trade to the countries of Asia and the Middle East, the Russians are appropriating another idea once promoted by the Japanese. That idea they expressed in the term "co-prosperity sphere." The Japanese through their own folly wasted the good will and sympathy which these ideas aroused. The Russians are now using these ideas with considerable effect.

Both U Nu and Sukarno during their visits to the United States begged us to understand why the peoples of the underdeveloped countries feel so strongly about these needs and aspirations. They asked us to realize that they can be met only with outside help and that democracy cannot survive unless they are met. As U Nu ex-

plained it, the former colonies have suddenly been projected into the twentieth century, but are not yet of the twentieth century. They have adopted "with great enthusiasm and great faith, the principles, the methods and the apparatus of modern political democracy But if this democratic society is to remain secure and to strengthen and deepen its roots, then we must make haste to catch up with the twentieth century. Thus we have been in a hurry, and we are in a hurry." The other peoples of Asia and Africa, he said, are also in a hurry, for "if progress is disappointing or if there is no progress then there is always a dictatorship or a potential dictator ready to offer better times to the masses."

The demand for economic and social progress in a hurry is as much a fact of the Asian situation as the demands for independence and equality. And the problems of economic development are just as complex as the political problems.

The United Nations World Economic Survey for 1955 shows that the gap in production between the underdeveloped and the developed countries has widened steadily since World War II. This has happened in spite of the foreign aid delivered by the United States, the Colombo Plan, and the United Nations during the last eight years. One reason for the gap is that population growth in the underdeveloped countries has absorbed a higher proportion of the rise in production than in the more advanced. Primary production everywhere has expanded more slowly than manufacturing, and primary production makes up four-fifths of the total production of the underdeveloped countries and less than one third of the advanced countries. And so the underdeveloped countries are not catching up but are falling farther behind.

For four or five years after 1947 the Soviet Communists were telling the Asians that the only way they could satisfy their nationalist aspirations, achieve equality and catch up with the West was to follow the example of China. They should throw out the local nationalists, install Communists at the head of affairs, and follow the lead of the Big Brother, Russia. This was the policy of revolution and civil war. Then came the change. The Communists aimed to draw the Asians into the orbit of Soviet leadership, not by revolu-

tion or military alliances, but by espousing the Asian-originated Five Principles of Coexistence and by a program of trade and economic aid allegedly without political strings attached.

The Communists present their economic aid program not as grants or gifts from the rich to the poor but as a joint enterprise consisting, as they put it, of "a comprehensive expansion of normal economic links based on mutual benefits and equality." Unlike the Americans, the Russians make few outright gifts, but when they make a gift they create quite a splash—a hundred-bed hospital in Afghanistan, for example, or the equipment for a state farm in India, or a technological institute in Burma. For the most part Soviet economic aid consists of barter by which the USSR provides industrial equipment and technological training on the basis of loans of two- or three-percent interest and payable in five to twelve years in local products like rice, rubber, cotton, jute, copra, and so forth. These arrangements are of great benefit to the Asian countries inasmuch as they enable them to use the surpluses that they cannot dispose of in the free world for the capital goods and technical training that they urgently want.

The Sino-Soviet bloc has created a wide network of barter and bilateral agreements with Asian, African, and Latin American countries. This network is calculated to do three significant things: (1) to destroy the triangular or multilateral pattern of international trade which the United States and its allies have been trying to re-establish; (2) to provide outlets in the Sino-Soviet bloc for surpluses from the underdeveloped countries; and (3) to persuade the leaders of these countries that economic association with the Sino-Soviet bloc offers greater promise of economic development and political independence than the foreign trade policies and foreign aid programs of the Western powers.

The Sino-Soviet bloc is also pushing to expand the export of scientific and technical services. Experts from the much advertised Soviet universities and institutes are being offered through the U.N. and in teams, as was done in the case of the big steel mill being built with much fanfare in India.

The Sino-Soviet bloc has not always been able to fulfill its part of its barter agreement. For example, the Argentine, which is the largest single underdeveloped trade partner with the Soviet bloc, built up a credit balance of some \$40,000,000 because Soviet counterdeliveries fell behind. Egypt, the second largest partner, in 1955 exported twice as much to the Sino-Soviet bloc as she imported from it and had a credit balance of about \$60,000,000. The Sino-Soviet bloc has its own underdeveloped areas in Russian and Chinese Central Asia and in Siberia. Can the Communists divert enough of their production from their own needs to meet the requirements of their ambitious program in Asia? The answer seems to be that they are likely to find a way. Senator Mansfield's subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has reported that within the space of thirteen months the Soviet foreign aid program has expanded to over one billion dollars in credits offered and may actually be larger than the American economic aid program.

V

Like most other members of the human race, the Asians want peace. They want peace because they have experienced modern war and because an Asian country, Japan, has been the testing ground for the frightful power of atomic weapons. They want peace because, as U Nu put it, the Asians need peace more than anything else to accomplish the transition to the twentieth century. Sukarno, in a moving paragraph, sums up the feeling not only of many Asians but of men of good will of all continents. After saying that men cannot give their whole thought and effort to the welfare of mankind because "a shadow, pregnant with horror, hangs over the future," he continued:

There is irony in the fact that for the first time ever, man has it within his power to make the desert bloom like a garden, to banish poverty and want from the world, to open up a new era of brotherhood, and yet, at the same time, no man can look with confidence into the future. The rivers and the tides obey our command; we bestride the skies and pluck wealth from under the earth and the sea; we conquer the age-old plagues of hu-

manity and even fight a winning battle against death. At the same time we dig ourselves shelters in the rocks and prepare to sit and die in them as man did during the dawn of the world. Have we then made so little progress? Have we learned nothing?

One of the greatest achievements of the Communists in their new course is to implant the belief in the minds of a great many Asians in the noncommitted countries that it is the nations of the Sino-Soviet bloc that are working for peace, for the outlawry of nuclear weapons, for the peaceful use of the newly developed sources of energy, and that it is the United States and its allies that are holding back. The Asians who have endured Communist aggressions presumably have not forgotten them, but they seem to be willing to overlook them and to accept the claim that the Communists have turned over a new leaf and taken a new course because: (1) war has become obsolete and avoidable; and (2) peaceful coexistence of different systems is possible and offers a better test than war to determine which of the competitive systems is best.

Asian leaders must realize that one of the aims of the new Communist course is to unhinge the Western collective security alliances—NATO, SEATO, and the Baghdad Pact—while retaining their own mutual security alliances between Russia and China, and Russia and the eastern European satellites. Asians know that some Asian governments still fear aggression and find greater security in the regional pacts. But these considerations, it seems, are overshadowed by the Russians' ostentatious identification with the Five Principles and their large promises of aid, not for collective defense against a new imperialism, but to strengthen the foundations of peace through economic development. The Asians have been pleased by President Eisenhower's "atoms for peace" proposals and by the American plans to share its knowledge and experience with Asian countries; but they have undoubtedly been impressed by Soviet propaganda for the reduction of armaments, the outlawry of nuclear weapons, and the cessation of experiments with such weapons in the Pacific. A great many Asians, though not all, believe that peace in Asia would be strengthened if the Communist People's

Government in Peking were admitted to the United Nations as the spokesman of China.

VI

It is too soon to know how the new course and the denunciation of Stalin will affect the fortunes of Asian Communist parties. The Asians appear to have been less upset than the Western Communists by the Moscow revelations of what some Western Communists have called the degeneration of Soviet and party democracy, the perversion of justice and internationalism. The Asian comrades seem likely to look more than ever to Peking rather than to Moscow for inspiration and guidance.

The Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party has considered the decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and in general has approved them. But the Chinese warmly praise themselves for having avoided the mistakes that the Russians made. The conclusion is inescapable that Asian comrades will be wise to follow the example of the Chinese Party which knows how to benefit from great leaders without developing the evil symptoms of the cult of personality.

The official Chinese Communist position published first in the *Jen Min Jih Pao* and reprinted in *Pravda* says that leaders play a great role in history. They could not say less in view of the roles now being played by Mao Tse-tung in China, Kim Il-Sung in North Korea, and Ho Chi Minh in North Vietnam. Stalin is praised for his policies of industrialization, for collectivization of agriculture, for his successful struggles against fascism and Japanese militarism. He gained fame and deserved it; but, the article suggests, it went to his head, leading to self-glorification, the cult of the individual, and arbitrary rule. By inference the Chinese Politburo justifies Stalin's bloody purges of those who are called Trotskyites, Zinovievites, enemies of Leninism, and agents of the bourgeoisie.

The Chinese leaders are now engaged in industrialization, collectivization, and occasional purges, and so are bound to approve Stalin's accomplishments in these activities. The Politburo admits

that the Chinese Communist Party "has more than once blundered gravely." It is perhaps not surprising to discover that these blunders were made by leaders like Chen Tu-hsiu in the 1920's, Li Li-san and Wang Ming in the 1930's, and Kao Kang in the 1950's. No errors are admitted for Mao Tse-tung, whose acts are as immune to criticism as Stalin's were in the days of his glory. The Chinese Communists have succeeded where the Russians failed, it is claimed, by combining collective leadership with personal responsibility and by following the line of "relying on the masses."

The article ends by prophesying that after the great camp of peace and socialism has finished correcting its mistakes, it will be "still more powerful and ever invincible." The Soviet Union is referred to as the head of the "camp," but the lesson is clear that it is not in the Soviet Union but in China where the science of Marxism-Leninism, the principle of democratic centralism, and the "dictatorship of the people led by the working class" flourish without blemish.

Soviet leaders have not only denounced Stalin, called for peaceful coexistence, adopted the Five Principles, and praised the Bandung spirit, but they have also recognized the possibility that local Communist parties can gain control of their governments by peaceful competition with other parties, that is, by the ballot box instead of armed uprisings. The origin and significance of these new tactics have been variously interpreted. They have been explained as a revival of the popular front in Europe during the 1930's and as an adaptation of the "four-class bloc" developed by Mao in China in the 1940's. Whatever their origin, the new tactics of peaceful and legal competition are complementary to the international policies of peaceful coexistence and zones of peace. The new tactics do not mean that the Communists are to stop working to set up a totalitarian dictatorship. It merely means that the Kremlin has recognized that under certain conditions a totalitarian party, as Hitler and Mussolini have shown, may gain control of the state by legal or parliamentary means. Once power has been gained, the totalitarian system can be imposed and the revolution carried out from above. For such tactics the Chinese formula of the "dic-

tatorship of the people led by the workers" would be more acceptable to Asians than the Soviet formula of the dictatorship of the proletariat led by its vanguard, the Communist Party.

These changes in international policy and party tactics seem to suggest that conditions have forced the Russians—at least temporarily—to give up one-man rule over the CPSU and one-party rule over the world Communist movement. The reconciliation with Tito is recognition of the possibility of an independent Communist government. The Chinese Communists have dared to suggest that they are purer Marxist-Leninists than their Russian teachers. The local parties have been invited, within limits, to decide what tactics to use. The Asian parties still look to the Russians and Lenin's party for aid and guidance, but the possibilities of deviation, disagreements, and schisms among the Asian Communists have greatly increased. Whether the Communist movement continues along the road of disintegration depends in a large measure on the degree to which the non-Communists of Asia and the West are able to co-operate in serving the needs and aspirations of Asia.

The United States—as well as the countries of Asia—has been passing through a great revolution in foreign political relations. We are beginning to feel the pains of a comparable revolution in foreign economic relations. We shall lessen the hurt and perhaps shorten the time of readjustment if we realize that the Communist movement is a symptom and not the cause of this revolution. This means that we should build our policy on a more substantial foundation than anti-Communism. It means that we should also realize that, although the Communists have not changed their aims, they have significantly changed their methods, and that the new methods are likely to be more successful than the old in dealing with problems of underdeveloped areas because the Communists have taken into account the aspirations and needs of these areas.

We ought also to recognize that we and the Asians have common fundamental interests which will be better served by expanding the institutions of co-operation than by making the continuance of aid dependent on political support. In devising methods of co-operation we need not necessarily appropriate more money, but

we can use what we do appropriate more effectively. This requires greater knowledge of the social institutions as well as sympathetic consideration of the particular problems of the countries concerned.

President Eisenhower expressed the spirit and purpose of such co-operation in his speech to the American Presidents' Conference in Panama on July 22, 1956: "So, just as we have agreed that we should join to combat armed aggression, let us also join to find ways which will enable our peoples to combat the ravages of disease, poverty, and ignorance. Let us give them, as individuals, a better opportunity not only to pursue happiness but to gain it."

No one can harm the man who does himself no wrong.

—ST. CHRYSOSTOM

THE GENTLE ART OF THINKING

by *Albert Guérard*

IN THREE consecutive numbers of *The Pacific Spectator, Homo Intellectualis* (not sapiens) has taken a series of resounding drubbings, and by expert hands. He is “in a plight”; he suffers from “malaise”; he is “psychopathic.” The cream of the jest is that *The Spectator* is a magazine of the highest brow; the I.Q. of its readers must average 140; that of its contributors 160; that of its editorial board 180. And the cream of the cream is that the doughty anti-intellectuals are themselves—and they are aware of it—intellectuals in excellent standing. As Voltaire wrote to Rousseau: “*On n'a jamais employé tant d'esprit à vouloir nous rendre bêtes*”: never was so much wit lavished in praise of the witless. This of course is part of *Psychopathia Intellectualis*: one of the surest symptoms of the dread disease intellectualism is an immoderate fondness for paradox.

This to me is a personal matter: I am fighting *pro aris et focis*. My mind was formed at the time of the Dreyfus crisis. The word *intellectuel*, a neutral adjective, was picked up then as a term of contempt by those who honestly and fervently refused to use their minds. They felt it in their bones, their hearts, their blood, that Dreyfus must be guilty. Else their heavens would fall. “If he were innocent, that would be his greatest crime.” To me, an unsophisticated schoolboy, this dark and profound argument did not sound convincing. So I took my place, with modest pride, with the rank and file of the *Intellectuels*. Sixty years have gone by, and I have not repented my choice. Back of our “intellectual” leaders, I became aware of the Enlightenment, and its fight against injustices, abuses, privileges, superstitions, the “wisdom of prejudice.” Back of Voltaire, I encountered Pascal: “The whole dignity of man lies in his thought,” and Descartes: “I think, therefore I am.” And I could trace back further that eternal contest of mind against chaos:

to the *Summa* of St. Thomas, a triumph of intellectualism, to the *Organon* of Aristotle. Evidently, the use of the term *intellectuel* by the anti-Dreyfusist was not the only conceivable one.

Both the immortal Caterpillar in *Alice* and Stuart Chase warn us against the tyranny of words. What are mere phonetic or graphic symbols, that they should dare to assume an existence of their own? Words mean what we mean. So by *intellectual* we are perfectly free to understand whatever we choose, in defiance of the hobgoblin etymology. By the same token, if we are careless, unscrupulous, willful, or masterful enough, we may if we list use the word *patriotism* to denote "the last refuge of the scoundrel," and we shall have weighty Dr. Johnson on our side. We may take *bourgeois* (town dweller), and, with Gautier, have it signify the Philistine, or with Marx, the man of property. We may take *capitalist* and have it stand for profiteer, racketeer, or even bloodsucker. We may—and we usually do—say *Communist* when what we have in mind is Stalinist; overlooking the facts that the early Christians were communists, and that the evils of the Stalin regime, now denounced by the Communists, existed even more glaringly under the rule of Hitler or his friend Franco. We may assume, with the anthropologists, that the word *culture* stands for the exact reverse of culture. We may narrow down *Art for Art's Sake* to Oscar Wilde and the Yellow 'Nineties, forgetting that no great art, from Homer through Shakespeare to the present day, can live except under its own law. If we decree that *French* is equivalent to "bedroom farce," as Elliot Paul did, who is to prevent us? Certainly not the ghosts of Corneille, Bossuet, Buffon, Lamarck, Pasteur, Claude Bernard, or Bergson. Most strikingly, why not say *religion* when we mean superstition or fanaticism? Then Lucretius was right: "*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*"; and Voltaire was right: "*Ecrasez l'Infâme!*"; and even Proudhon was right: "*Dieu, c'est le Mal.*" In all these cases, we pick out a flaw, a danger, a caricatural excess, and we give it the name of a whole group or a whole philosophy. It is realistic to recognize that the noblest cause may have unworthy servants, and that even a great man may have warts. It is either naïve or disingenuous to equate the man with the warts.

The plainest, the most essential meaning of *intellectual* is: a man aware that he has an intellect, and resolved to make the most careful use of it. The *nonintellectuals* embrace the dumb, the demented, and the perverse; we may leave them out of consideration. The *anti-intellectuals*, or conscious rebels against the intellect, are those who tremble lest their intellect run counter to their vested interests, which include their cherished prejudices. The first rule of the intellectuals is: "You shall seek the truth, and the quest shall make you free." The first rule of the anti-intellectuals is: "Nonsense, be thou my sense!" The intellectuals can claim as their guide the great scientist and mystic Pascal: "We must strive to think accurately: such is the foundation of moral life." The anti-intellectuals can boast of a still greater master, St. Paul: "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"

Before we wrestle with the central problem, let us clear up a few minor misconceptions. I am sure that Messrs. Kirk, Hoffer, Galdston, Bliven, Fiedler, *et al.* would agree that the intellectual is not committed to the worship of formal logic. "Logic is logic, that is all," and it is not enough. Logic is an instrument, crude in its traditional syllogistic form, refined in the hands of a Rudolf Carnap: but the merest instrument, a piece of mental cybernetics. Feed the wrong data into the machine, and you will infallibly get the wrong results. On a higher plane, the intellectual is not a pure rationalist: for rationalism, the belief in the infallibility of human reason, is a system and, like all systems when they assume command, a hindrance to living untrammeled thought. The affirmation that, in this patently absurd world, "the rational and the real are one," is the most flagrant of fallacies. Its inanity can be matched only by the assertions: "Everything that is, is right," and "All is for the best in the best possible world." All these sublimities are actually insults to man's intelligence.

The intellectual, I repeat, knows that the intellect is but an instrument, of limited range, and imperfect even within that range. But he believes that, *on the human plane*, that instrument is indispensable. What though freedom of choice, and the responsibility entailed by that choice, had but an infinitesimal part in this uni-

verse? To us, they are all important; they are our *raison d'être* and our *raison de vivre*. And you cannot choose freely, unless you choose with open eyes, after weighing the alternatives.

Edwin Muir, in his sensitive and moving *Autobiography*, tells us how he once was an intellectual, and how he escaped from that bondage: "To support myself, I adopted the watchword of 'intellectual honesty,' and in its name committed every conceivable sin against honesty of feeling, and honesty in the mere perception of the world with which I daily came into contact." His manifold sins, however, were not due to intellectual honesty—he is no advocate of outright intellectual dishonesty—but to the confusion between purpose, doctrine, and instrument. He had adopted a certain brand of socialism, idealistic in its general inspiration, materialistic, pseudological, and pseudo-scientific in its formulation; and to that hybrid idol, unlovely but not ignoble, he sacrificed not facts and feelings merely, but the independence, the integrity, of his own thought. I do not doubt that he committed many sins; again, it is possible to sin in the name of the holiest causes, distorted and hardened into caricatures. He himself quotes the device of the Covenanters fighting against Montrose: "Christ and no quarter," a device as anti-Christian as "massive retaliation." Muir is a lovable poet; but his intellectual education had been spotty. In perfect faith, he mistook a sectarian or partisan discipline for the whole service of truth. His adopting socialism was one of his many "conversions," a non-rational experience; and like the others, it left him empty and slightly ashamed. His was not the malaise of an intellectual, but the malaise of one who had crippled his own intellect as well as his sentiments and his sense of reality. The remedy was not "Down with intellectual honesty!" but "Let us strive to be more scrupulously honest."

Edwin Muir was right in making *honesty* the keyword. (Descartes used a long phrase to mean exactly the same thing: "Never to accept a thing as true unless it appeared to me clearly and evidently to be such": do not submit, do not ape, do not fake.) Honesty is a quality which has nothing to do with formal erudition. An intellectual may be "poor but honest," and riches, while desirable, are no proof of rectitude. Patently there are many learned fools, many

more learned dullards, and not a few learned crooks. We find, and not merely in the court room, brilliant advocates who are shysters on the grand scale: Charles Maurras, who wrote a notable book on *L'Avenir de l'Intelligence*, had a powerful but warped intellect. Such men are traitors to the intellect, racketeers of the intellect, not intellectuals. The plain man may chance to pick out the right road, and plod his uninspired way toward the truth. In the 'nineties, many working people were saner than famous sophisticates like Charles Maurras, Jules Lemaître, and Paul Valéry. Renan confessed ruefully that after a lifetime of philological and theological studies, he had reached the same conclusions as the Voltairian in the street. Erudition is the command of many facts, the familiarity with many ideas; but this knowledge is no guarantee that the intellect will use it with common honesty.

I am not professing contempt for knowledge; I am only reaffirming the age-long primacy of wisdom. It was not an intellectual, a disciple of the Enlightenment, who said grandly: "First of all, let us sweep aside the facts!" It was Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a man of faith, imagination, and sentiment, a man after Edwin Muir's own heart, an Obscurantist, a sun of darkness of purest ray serene. The intellectual, as such, does not distort "the mere perception of the world with which he daily comes into contact." He does not reject, or attempt to twist, hard facts in the name of his pet Utopia. He accepts all facts as facts; and everything that exists is a fact, the stench as well as the fragrance, the poison no less than the food. Even delusions, even lies, are facts to be reckoned with, facts of their own kind and in their own domain, which is extensive. A nightmare is a reality. Every stable relation between facts is a truth of experience, and must be acknowledged as such: objects fall, wolves eat lambs, and the praying mantis devours her mate. The intellectual is the man who does not deny the universe, but who refuses to accept it passively. With the intellect as his instrument (not as his guide), he chooses between the facts. He is for the germicide and against the germ. He picks out the facts and laws which "make sense," i.e., what to him is sense. The others he does not brush aside; he acknowledges them by combating them. You can go full tilt against hard

facts, with harder facts as your weapons. That is what the sanitary engineer, the doctor, the police, and the judge are constantly striving to do.

Let us reiterate that the intellectual is not, as Muir once was, committed to the rationalistic dogma. He is aware of forces outside the realm of pure reason. These forces may be subhuman: the long, inescapable heritage of primitive brutality, the urges, the instincts, the passions, which at any moment threaten to blast the frail edifice of our rational cosmos. The intellectual is aware that there is a beast slumbering in the best of us, Taine's "ferocious and lustful gorilla." These forces may be human, but too subtle or too lofty for reasoning or even for reasonableness. *Mind* and *Love* cannot be caught in the mesh of statistics, even by a Terman or a Kinsey. As Pascal (*toujours Pascal!*) put it, "The heart has its reasons which reason cannot probe"; and with "the heart," or sentiment, I would also name imagination and ecstasy. For there is the possibility, which cannot be denied *a priori*, that we may be granted glimpses of a reality beyond the ken of erudition, science, or philosophy. I am a son of the Enlightenment: but I know that there are forces dark with the blank darkness of the void, and forces dark with excess of light.

Now—and this is the crucial point in this debate—what will be the stand of the intellectual in presence of these mysteries? Deny them offhand he will not; his first rule is to think, and to think honestly, not to be the slave of the rationalistic dogma. He knows from his schooldays that "there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Nor will he conveniently sweep them aside into the vasty halls of Spencer's Unknowable. But still less will he capitulate to the powers of unreason, as Romantic Germany did, and call that surrender profundity, "congruency with the unutterable." He will face them with his faculties and responsibilities as a man, and submit even them to the fearless critical test of his intellect. His attitude is that of the psychoanalyst: yes, there is an unconscious, and a subconscious, but it is our duty and our hope to throw light into their obscure recesses. This light has healing in its wings; it dissolves the unnamable dread which is

a disease of the soul. Even so with "the heart": blind passion is not the highest form of love. He loves best who loves with his eyes open.

Even so, and *a fortiori*, with the mystic experience. The intellectual does not shrug away its existence and its validity; that would be rank dishonesty. But he affirms that such an experience cannot be translated into human terms, applied to the conduct of human affairs, without rigorous critical examination. "Absurdity!" cries the mystic; "you cannot at the same time be enraptured and coolly analytical." Granted. We are dealing now, not with the immediate and unique experience, which we accept as a datum, but with its memory, its interpretation, the practical consequences we derive from it. There the necessity of the critical method is universally acknowledged. Not every hallucination is to be accepted as a revelation. We strive to distinguish between the madman, the faker, and the prophet. The most uncompromising Fundamentalists turn into "intellectuals" when appraising any faith not their own. The Catholic Church, proud of a long roll of great mystics, probes all mystic claims with scientific scruple. A vision may be due to a drug (William James attempted to snatch the secret of the universe with some kind of hashish), or to a disease; there are wards for unconvincing mystics. A vision may be, as her judges told Joan of Arc, a snare from the Tempter as well as a message from the Lord. In *this* world —the only world for which *The Pacific Spectator* is published—we have the right and the duty to examine critically the assertions of every prophet that ever arose in Los Angeles; and, for that matter, in Kapilavatsu, Mecca, or Wittenberg.

I can see the weary smile with which Messrs. Burdick, Russell Kirk, Koerner, Hoffer, Galdston, Bliven, Fiedler, Muir, Viereck (their name is legion) will tell me: "Waste of breath! You know as well as we do that by intellectuals we do not mean intellectuals." But is there no danger in systematically altering the sense of a word? For the sake of honesty, then, let us drop *intellectual* as at least ambiguous, and use instead the plain downright terms *crackpot* and *egghead*. Are we on safer ground? Hardly; for a gratuitous insult does not constitute an argument. Or rather it should not; but it does,

and a telling one, if we allow our intellect to relax. Examine, after Descartes, Leibniz, and many scientists, the possibility of a streamlined international language: "Crackpot scheme!" and that is that. Dally, for legitimate purposes, with the idea that there can be no peace without justice, no justice without law, no law without government: "Egghead!" is enough to settle the point. It is much more realistic, and much more in harmony with the "dark forces" in the hearts of men, to prepare for an Armageddon of H-bombs. Dare to ask whether public utilities should be run for private profit: then *egghead* and *crackpot* will not suffice. The one crushing argument will be hurled: "*Pink! Fellow traveler!*" It is as simple as that.

I am a student of history. Repeatedly, I found that the intellectuals, or crackpots, or eggheads, were right against the passionate and the fanatics on the one hand, against the tough realists on the other. A genuine constitutional monarchy was possible in the enlightened France of 1789, but there was a Marie Antoinette, and there were many Marats. A democratic united Germany was possible in 1849; the gradual abolition of slavery was possible in the 1850's; a self-governing Ireland, in close and friendly relationship with England, was possible in 1894; a limited Federal World Government is possible today. In every case, the intellectuals were defeated. Not to the world's advantage. After a clash of "No quarter—No surrender—Blood and iron" policies, after decades of confusion, hatred, and murderous strife, the "intellectual," i.e., the reasonable, solution still remains the best.

The intellectual is by definition the man who attempts to practice the gentle (not genteel) art of thinking; and thinking, born of malaise, spreader of malaise, is a subversive activity. It is hard to conceive of any mental effort that is not subversive; Coolidge's preacher wanted to subvert sin, our oldest institution: a most unrealistic undertaking. I am not familiar with the sociology of the anthill; let qualified entomologists correct me if I err. I take it for granted that there are no intellectuals, no eggheads, no subversives, among ants. All ants accept the universe, the well-tried "way of life" of the ant community. They are antlike one hundred per cent, by the most exacting test of a formicular McCarthy. For a time, it

looked as though we might reach that blissful state by 1984. But that hope is fading away. The intellectuals will still be with us, questing, disturbing because discontented, for at least a generation. For, as our thinking shows healthful signs of slowing down (*The Pacific Spectator* and *The Southwest Review* excepted), that of the Russians seems to be waking up. Heeding Matthew Arnold (unawares), they are "turning a stream of fresh and free thought on their stock notions and habits," viz., the worship of Big Brother. A weary world. Will the chirp of the egghead never be stilled in the land?

Intellectual! Crackpot! Egghead! The obvious fallacy these words imply is judging in terms of arbitrary categories, not on the merits of the case. Wise men in their days—and in ours—have proposed incredibly silly things; while flashes of sense might well come out of eggheads. It was eminently realistic, while we alone stood rich and secure in a distracted world, to suggest "a quart of milk for every Hottentot." Later, the same spirit inspired the Marshall Plan and Point Four. Rather than the dream of sheer power ("a position of strength"), it should be the core of our policy. The San Francisco bridges loomed hazily through the addled brains of Emperor Norton; and lo! they came into being. On the other hand, what could be more of a crackpot scheme—to the uninitiated—than the proposal to launch an artificial satellite? Yet hard-headed men are backing it with hard cash. The question is not "Is the man a fool?" (in our eyes), but "Is the plan feasible and worth while?"

We have a right to condemn a group, as such, when that group holds itself apart, as in sole possession of some esoteric nostrum. Such an assumption of collective superiority is vouched for, as a rule, not by plain arguments, but by cryptic passwords and shibboleths. Something of the kind was implied in the hateful and obsolete term *intelligentsia*: "We, whose minds are not primitive . . ." Half a century ago I saw its pathetic twilight; there was a cult called Boston Culture. This holier-than-thou attitude, these thanks returned unto the Lord that we are not as other men are, may be found in every sphere of human activity. In the social world, its name is snobbishness; in the learned world, it is pedantry; in the

religious world, it is pharisaism; in the artistic world, it is the tyranny of cliques and chapels. What a temptation! To achieve distinction not through honest thought and hard work, but on bargain terms, by joining the right club and repeating the right phrases! “We, the happy few”: an admirable selling device, a bait for the mass-minded who must “join” in order to be right. Anyone who claims membership in an élite is thereby confessing vulgarity. In all domains, intellectual and religious, the path is open to all men, even though many will stumble or stray; and for all men, gifted or handicapped, the path is arduous and lonely.

But the intellectuals are not the worst offenders in the snobbish claim to constitute an élite. Far from it. At the time of the Dreyfus crisis, as I stated before, many “common men” with a sound mind and a clean heart joined the *intellectual* crusade, while many sophisticates brilliantly defended injustice and unreason. In the New Deal era, I imagine that not a few ambitious young men fancied themselves as potential Brain-Trusters. They hoped to “muscle in,” and corner the spoils. If *they* are suffering a *malaise* at present, it serves them right. But the movement derived its strength from the masses. I have been following for decades the most notorious egg-head periodicals, *The Nation* and *The New Republic*. I have seen traces of bias, and even shadows of superciliousness. But on the whole, their record is one of “intellectual honesty”: good will served by the critical spirit and checked by the experimental method. And I do not see why they should be ashamed of that record.

There is a malaise in our society: at the summit of prosperity and power, a foreboding, an anguish, a dread, which may drive us to drink, to war, or to the cloisters. We are torn between pride in our material success and the warnings of our conscience. For we cannot hush the intellect, and the intellect challenges the five formidable idols which enslave our Free World: racial pride, the Leviathan sovereign state, the party system, the profit motive, the sectarian church—all the conformities, the orthodoxies, the vital lies, that we are pledged to maintain, “right or wrong.”

Perhaps Coolidge’s preacher was justified after all: we should take our stand against sin; and the sin against the Holy Ghost, the

betrayal of the spirit, is the refusal to think. This battle (fought within as well as among us) is dubious, and will ever remain dubious. The fanatics and the tough realists win many a skirmish; yet their victory never is secure. The crackpots, the eggheads of today, if they were to triumph, would become "hard-headed," or numbskulls, just as the Daughters of the Revolution have turned into the deadliest foes of all revolutions. Success petrifies, as surely as power corrupts. I am not on the side of the angels, for there is no thought and no malaise among them; neither am I on the side of the saints and the contented cows. I am on the side of the intellectuals: it is they who keep mankind human.

The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.

—F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

PSYCHIATRY AND THE INTELLECTUAL'S PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

by Milton Rose, M.D., and Mary Ann Esser

THE pursuit of happiness leads man along many rough roads, and that of the "intellectual" is perhaps the roughest. He is, first of all, a man, sharing with his fellows the capacities and limitations, the ambitions, frustrations, and necessities of the human lot. He suffers disappointment, sickness, and loss, and must go on earning a living for himself and his family and providing for the support of his government and his community. That would seem a heavy enough load for any man. The intellectual, alas, labors under a further handicap. He worries. He worries about human destiny and the welfare of the individual; about freedom, justice, morality, and the rights of man; about economics, politics, education, and the state of the nation; about the common man, the uncommon man—and the intellectual. He worries because he believes that "what ought to be" is as important as "what is," yet the world around him appears to be ignorantly or willfully blind to this truth, or at least to be making terrible mistakes in its actual practice.

So he speaks up. That is one identifying mark of the intellectual—his articulateness, public or private, about the problem of the "ought" and the status quo. He may not be a public figure nor voice his criticisms beyond the range of a limited community, but he will express in some way his awareness of the long-range "cause and effect" of ideas and institutions on the happiness and well-being of men, and he will recognize that his personal welfare is part of and dependent upon that of the rest of mankind. Plainly, there are many who are intellectuals in this sense who would not call themselves or be called by others, in quotes, "intellectuals." Never-

theless, they are linked together by their wish to understand and try to solve the age-old problems of human life.

Every man lives not only his own life as an individual but also, whether or not he is consciously aware of it, the life of his age. The intellectual will both express and judge the values and aspirations of his time and their embodiment in private character and social institutions. His criticism as well as its object will be a product of the contemporary state of mind.

Dissatisfaction with man and the life he has made for himself implies a comparison of the actuality with some ideal. The intellectual must have decided what "the good life" should consist of, though he may be uncertain about the appropriate means of achieving it. Concepts of the good life and specific programs for assuring the happiness and best welfare of mankind change with the years, though there is, to be sure, a certain constant element. Because the intellectual belongs in the "high I.Q. bracket" and is well educated (though by no means always an academician), he can draw upon both his own powers of reason and imagination and his knowledge of the experience and accumulated wisdom of the past. The result is a search for the good life in the context of present circumstances and a translation of the fundamental human problems into an idiom that will be meaningful to the contemporary mind.

The plight of the American intellectual is no different from the plight of the intellectual of other times and places, but it assumes a distinctive character from the particular pressures of our time. The world today faces a complex mixture of practical and "spiritual" problems in an atmosphere charged with the feeling that failure to find immediate solutions will quite possibly result in a tragic destruction of most, perhaps all, of civilization. Practical questions of economics and politics are extremely complicated in this industrial age and are inextricably bound up with ideological conflicts which split the world and threaten to erupt into violence beyond imagining. The intellectual is peculiarly equipped to realize the incalculable value of what is at stake, to appreciate the enormity of the danger to mankind. He is more than ever anxious to find some just and peaceful way to adapt society to the rightful needs

and desires of all men. He may focus his attention on the over-all picture or on some smaller detail of it, on the fundamental moral issues or some aspect of domestic policy in economics, politics, or education. Whatever the field of his specific concern, implicit in his interest will be the wish to promote the cause of human happiness, in the broadest sense. The expression of his discontent and the corrective measures he suggests will reflect the prevailing fears and beliefs of this age.

The American intellectual shares in an almost universal belief in science. This belief embraces both confidence in the power of science to provide factual knowledge and to solve many of our problems, and, more subtly, faith in the ultimate solubility of *all* problems. A generation which relies on facts and believes that scientific research reveals an absolute "truth" finds it relatively easy to assume that truth about values is as accessible to us as truth about physical facts. The powerful human urge to know the "how" and "why" of things has been both satisfied and stimulated by the tremendous success of the natural sciences. The most powerful urge of all—to know about man himself—has led to an increasing demand to add to the domain of science that group of disciplines known as the behavioral sciences, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics. These disciplines claim both the methods and the goal of science, that is, knowledge on the basis of which we can predict and control natural phenomena, in this case human behavior. This sounds like the answer to the intellectual's prayers: What better way to solve human problems than by acquiring scientific knowledge about the source of the problems—the human personality itself?

Let us consider, then, what modern psychiatry offers the intellectual in his pursuit of happiness.

Of all the fields of science, pure and applied, psychiatry seems most relevant to the pursuit of happiness. From it we expect to learn the truth about the nature of man and the causes and cures for his psychological disabilities, from the most trivial and transitory to the most serious and refractory. The science of psychiatry, however, is not clear-cut and simple, either in theory or practice.

It has grown up in the framework of a medical specialty with mental illness as its first concern, but in recent years has extended its scope to take in all aspects of psychological functioning and human behavior. Psychiatry has become an important resource for social workers, public health workers, specialists in child rearing and education, and even industrial and business administrators.

The field of psychiatry today covers many schools of thought, each with its own way of explaining the nature and development of human personality and each claiming scientific validity for its theoretical system and the therapeutic method based upon it. It is assumed by all, of course, that personality and behavior, though they contain large elements of irrationality, nevertheless are comprehensible in rational terms.

The central theme around which seemingly endless variations have been elaborated was formulated by Sigmund Freud, and it is with good cause that the last half-century has sometimes been called "the Age of Freud." Freud was a forceful personality and an uncommonly trenchant and powerful writer. His works were presented as straightforward scientific treatises on the nature of mind and the causes of the mental and emotional disorders men are so prone to develop. Freud stressed the scientific character of the observations and inferences which led to his celebrated generalizations about the development of human personality. He postulated the dominance of unconscious forces over conscious intellect (notably the power of the sexual instinct), and introduced the concept of psychological defenses, especially repression, against these unconscious forces. He considered the early history of the individual—intellectual or not—in relation to his parents and siblings to be crucial in the formation of character and the ability of the adult to cope with life. Freud was not unmindful of constitutional or inborn influences as determinants of adult character, but he was interested primarily in the effect of early life experience.

Freud's dynamic psychiatry, with its emphasis on the play of psychological forces in the personality, was offered as a new science; among his followers, Freud's generalizations were accorded the status of "discoveries." The theory of unconscious motivation

became the core of later psychodynamic systems, including those which place greater emphasis than Freud on nonsexual forces, stressing the importance of cultural factors and interpersonal relationships as determinants of personality. Freud is generally accepted as the founder of modern psychiatry, even by those who oppose his theories, since it was Freud who forced the medical profession and the world at large to recognize the tremendous power of the irrational side of human nature both in health and in disease.

The existence of this irrational element was of course no new discovery. Man has been aware for hundreds of years that there is a secret and highly significant dimension to his own mind. Thomas Carlyle in 1838 made as explicit a statement about unconscious mental functioning as a psychiatrist might make today: "The uttered part of a man's life, let us always repeat, bears to the unuttered, unconscious part a small unknown proportion. He himself never knows it, much less do others." A great French contemporary of Freud, Pierre Janet, introduced an elaborate and original psychodynamic psychiatry which also included the concept of the unconscious. Although he was acclaimed during his lifetime, Janet's system of psychiatric theory and practice did not become generally popular. Some of his most significant works have not yet been translated into English.

This kind of situation is familiar in science. Sir William Osler once remarked, "In science the credit goes to the man who convinces the world, not to the man to whom the idea first occurs." Freud's greatest contribution was that he convinced the world, and so made possible the serious and open investigation of the innermost workings of the human mind, stimulating an amazing growth of psychiatry as a part of medicine and as a vital force in the development of the behavioral sciences.

It is not surprising that intellectuals, seeking salvation in an age of science, were quick to be impressed by Freud's writings, brilliant and persuasive in themselves and carrying also the prestige of the magic word "science." The subject matter of psychodynamic theory was, broadly, human nature, and so covered all sorts of matters traditionally philosophical or religious. Such were

the knotty problems of the determination of character and behavior, the significance of values and moral standards to man, and the relationship of individuals to each other and to society. If these matters turned out to belong in the realm of science, then the intellectual could look forward to having a final solution, at last, to the old problems of "ought" and "is" in human life. Intellectuals, especially in America, became strong supporters of dynamic psychiatry. They tried to apply its theories to all the ills of individuals and society and took comfort in "understanding" themselves and their fellow men, even though they found themselves still powerless to effect much improvement.

So strong was the appeal of psychodynamic theory as an explanation of human troubles and as a possible means of coping with them, that it was not long before the more important and colorful of its concepts were familiar to the general public. Often it was the intellectual—the novelist, the playwright, the poet—who transmitted these concepts. Literature and drama were seriously influenced by psychodynamic ideas, and considerable use was made of specific dynamic formulations in the structure of situations and the analysis of character. The theories began to appear, greatly simplified and often distorted, in popular "how to be happy" books. Psychiatrists themselves, concerned over what ought to be, wrote for the general public, explaining psychiatry and personality development. The language of psychodynamics became part of the common vocabulary. Whatever their contact with psychodynamic psychiatry, most people took it for granted that this was indeed a science, however mysterious and even farfetched it might sometimes sound.

"Scientific" psychological psychiatry is now almost a half-century old. What has come of the great expectations? How has modern psychiatry treated the intellectual?

The dominant point of view in psychiatry continues to be psychodynamic, though the positions of the several schools of thought are varied, often contradictory, and frequently supported with more vehemence than reference to scientific data. It appears that psychiatry has produced a great many different "scientific" expla-

nations of human behavior, criteria of normality and abnormality, and methods of promoting or discouraging various kinds of behavior. Certainly there is no general agreement about scientifically established criteria for human happiness or standards for "good" behavior and relationships, aside from the obvious standards relating to antisocial behavior or socially dangerous or unacceptable sexual deviations. There is conflict among psychiatrists as well as other interested groups about the desirability, theoretically and practically, of certain types of behavior. Some favor conformity and social adjustment as the ultimate in personal development, setting up as the norm a sociable, gregarious person with a well-developed sense of belonging and comfortable identification with the group. Others favor cultivating a strong sense of individuality and developing the unique potentialities of each person. Such conflict in opinions turns out to be over values rather than over differences in fact finding.

Psychodynamic psychiatry appears, then, not to have yielded the final answers sought by intellectuals. Indeed, it has raised a few new ones. Two questions, in particular, ought to be considered by the intellectual. First, is psychiatry "scientific" in the traditional sense of the term? And, second, what does science have to do with the pursuit of happiness, after all?

The answer which experience suggests to the first of these questions may sound harsh to advocates of a purely psychodynamic psychiatry, but it will be heartening to those who cherish a belief in the potentialities of traditional scientific method to improve the lot of man. Psychiatry as a medical discipline is still essentially a descriptive science and as such has made and continues to make significant contributions to the study of human nature and behavior through the description and classification of mental phenomena. This is much the same kind of knowledge as has been gathered in the past, but we have a great deal more of it now and can evaluate it from a new perspective. The psychiatrist is at his most unequivocally useful when dealing with frankly sick people. With them he employs the whole armamentarium of medicine in diagnosis and treatment. His diagnosis is arrived at by history taking, observation, and the use of instruments, while his treatment methods

include drugs, physical apparatus, and personal influence—that is, psychotherapy. The latter remains the psychiatrist's most effective tool, whatever his theoretical point of view, in handling most of the emotional disorders that are brought to him. Except in the case of the most serious mental illnesses and certain types of so-called "psychopathic" disorders, psychotherapy in its many forms is responsible for much of the good that psychiatrists are able to accomplish. Though psychiatry is only in the earliest stages of becoming truly scientific, there is no overestimating the value of having it put within the framework of medicine and scientific inquiry.

The psychiatrist as social philosopher is on less secure ground, though he does of course have the advantage of extensive and concentrated experience with human beings at their best and their worst. The intellectual has tended to accept the psychiatrist as an expert whose dicta and prophecies about human life should carry great weight because based on scientific knowledge. In fact, what the psychiatrist has to contribute in this respect appears to be no more "true" than what has been said by philosophers, poets, and religious leaders of the past and present. The prestige of the psychiatrist in 20th-century America clearly stems from his identification with science rather than from any unique philosophical contributions.

How can we explain the great popularity of psychodynamic psychiatry if it is not based on a firm scientific foundation? There are several reasons to account for its support by both professional and lay people. Most important, perhaps, is the desperate need of people everywhere for solutions to personal problems, their insistent demand to know "why" they are as they are, with the expectation that such understanding will make it possible to change what they will. Naturally they will cling as long as they can to anything that promises to help. Secondly, and not to be underestimated, is the fact that psychodynamic psychiatry does help a great many people. It makes use of one of the oldest and most efficacious treatments of all—the influence of one human being over another. Hippocrates himself pointed out that some patients "recover their health simply through their contentment with the goodness of the physician."

Another reason for the continued success of psychodynamic

psychiatry is an internal one, so to speak. That is that its theories are not easily subjected to the usual scientific procedures of testing and verification and are thus hard to "disprove" with any finality. Displacement of these theories will probably be indirect, by the gradual establishment of alternate theories based on further physiological and biochemical research.

There is further reason for the professional success of psychodynamic systems in that they soon became institutionalized and so tended to perpetuate themselves. Medical schools and university hospitals launched programs whose therapeutic orientation was predominantly psychodynamic. Psychiatrists of this persuasion tended to be prolific writers and gained prestige and reputation in the profession, attracting more and more students and followers.

Obviously, not all psychiatrists are or have been all-out supporters of psychodynamic theory or treatment methods. A large number of them have ignored or opposed those claiming the primacy of psychological factors in mental illness, though all psychiatrists necessarily recognize the efficacy of psychological influence on certain symptoms and conditions shown by psychiatric patients. These biologically oriented psychiatrists have tended not to support any one theory or therapeutic method. There has been some progress in the development of various drugs, certain physical treatments such as electric shock, and several types of brain surgery. In each instance there have been some psychiatrists who jumped to conclusions and made dramatic claims for the new treatment as a cure-all for mental illness. But in these cases the routine method of science, with its continuing process of experiment and verification, has made it possible to establish the actual benefits and dangers of each new treatment and to refute with scientific data any false or exaggerated claims. The search for physiological and biochemical knowledge of the nature and functioning of the human mind in health and disease goes on, largely in the laboratories of pure scientists investigating all the phenomena of living organisms.

In spite of its limitations, psychiatry has advanced the cause of human welfare. It is no small accomplishment to have taken the mentally ill out of the dungeon and torture chamber and put

them in hospitals where they are treated like sick human beings, even if most of their disorders remain for the time being incurable. It is perhaps an even greater achievement to have brought out into the open the tragically ubiquitous nature of mental and emotional suffering. No longer must thousands of people endure without hope secret agonies once not recognized as symptoms but concealed as shameful weaknesses or moral defects. Psychiatry can now offer at least some immediate help and the hope that one day man may be able to free himself of many of the painful and crippling ills that now afflict his mind and body.

Scientific progress in psychiatry as in the natural sciences is slow but certain, and the knowledge gained is public and cumulative. It is not the kind of knowledge that will ever enable the intellectual or anyone else to set up scientific rules for "the good life." Whatever we may be able to learn about the nature and functioning of the human mind and emotions, whatever degree of control we might be able to achieve over these and over human behavior, there will remain the problem of deciding what ideas, emotions and behavior are desirable, when and to what extent, and who is to do the deciding and controlling.

The worries of the intellectual are not over yet, but he should be optimistic as well as critical. The problems he sees unsolved all around him may seem overwhelming and the price of failure to deal with them greater in this time than ever in past civilizations. But man has proved himself a sturdy creature, flexible and almost impossibly durable. This applies to the "intellectual," too, for we have defined him as first of all a man. In the midst of his anguished appraisal of the present state of man, the intellectual might well step back for a moment, from time to time, and look at his endeavors from a longer perspective. He might then refresh himself with a smile and agree with Logan Pearsall Smith, who confessed, "When in modern books, reviews, and thoughtful magazines I read about the Needs of the Age, its Complex Questions, its Dismays, Doubts, and Spiritual Agonies, I feel an impulse to go out and comfort that bewildered Epoch, to wipe away its tears, still its cries, and speak edifying words of Consolation to it."

IRONY: VISION OR RETREAT?

by *Charles Child Walcutt*

AS THE nation struggles with the problem of desegregation, we are witnessing another of the long series of social dramas in which Theory and Practice interact to make history. Watching the clash between brute fact and democratic theory in the South we are reminded again of the problem. Do ideas ultimately control events, or do they come after as explanations and rationalizations of what has happened? In either case, we can say for a certainty that our understanding of ideas is imperfect until we have seen them in action, where their apparent bearings are not infrequently reversed. Some kinds of intellectual pursuits claim to be "pure" in that they do not imply or depend upon social action. Physicists have, for example, found themselves accused of not watching the social bearing of their researches: and literary critics have been alternately on one side or the other of this fence. Whereas Marxist critics have been eager to make history and have thought of their work as essentially a form of social action, the new critics have in general (and rather successfully) denied the charge that they are politically oriented, let alone reactionary, or, as their boldest attackers have asserted, fascistic.

Yet the irony which figures prominently in the literary discussions of the new critics is, as I shall try to show, currently bearing strange fruit in the social pronouncements of William Faulkner, who is our most distinguished writer and whose work lives richly in its regional, agrarian, southern setting. Mr. Faulkner has been saying that, although he has for years been an opponent of segregation in the South—even to the point where Negroes have begged him to be quiet—the nation must not attempt to impose desegregation on the South at this time. If it does, he says, there will be shootings of Negroes in the streets, and when this comes he will perforce find himself aligned with the militants, because the South's attitude toward the Negro is a *fact* which must be recognized and accepted

even though it defies the laws and principles of the nation. He describes this Southern attitude as a sort of social mystique, a texture, if you will, too complex to be penetrated by mere reason.¹

I am not disposed to condemn anyone who has written with the passion and insight and devotion to the human spirit that are elements of Mr. Faulkner's unique greatness; nor is it possible to question his good faith. But it is possible to identify in his current social pronouncements an intellectual orientation functionally related to the new critics' interest in literary irony, and in this orientation we may find how literary and social theories interact.

The new critics have been repeatedly charged with holding reactionary social ideas. Robert Gorham Davis called T. S. Eliot fascistic in "The New Critics and the Democratic Tradition," *American Scholar*, Winter, 1949-50. R. H. Robbins repeats the charge in *The T. S. Eliot Myth*, 1951. The attack is generalized by Morton White to include Reinhold Niebuhr and Walter Lippmann, in "Original Sin, Natural Law, and Politics," *Partisan Review*, Spring, 1956. It is given a brilliant new twist, in a manner to make for squirming and gnashing of teeth, by Richard Hofstadter, who ascribes "The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt" to status-pains of old families who are moving down the social scale and immigrants who are moving up. Both, he says, seek to strengthen their status-confidence by attacking "liberals, left-wingers, intellectuals, and the like."²

Yet the new critics have been formidably at ease in matters of controversy, and our land is littered with the corpses of their too-hasty attackers. One has the impression that they are terribly at ease because they live with the consciousness that they have steadily fought the good fight, that in our tottery times they have stood for sound scholarship, sound pedagogy, and sound moral principles. They have believed in the Word, and they have unceasingly proclaimed it, with abilities equal at once to their devotion and their confidence . . . Why, then, does the ground continue to be littered with the corpses of their adversaries, who continue to assault them

¹ "A Letter to the North," *Life*, March 5, 1956, p. 51.

² *American Scholar*, XXIV (Winter, 1954-55), p. 20.

with a zeal that is as earnest as it appears to be fruitless? Something obviously impels these assaulters, and it is a sincere conviction; but when they attack in political terms, insisting that the new critics are conservative to the point of being un-American, they are told that literary criticism has little or nothing to do with politics, and they are further shown on the unquestionable record that various of the loosely designated new critics have engaged in activities which by any fair test would be considered liberal or even (by McCarthy standards) radical.

Almost every American academic, furthermore, who indulges in pejorative animadversions on the new critics or their work prefacing his remarks with an acknowledgment of his great debt to them and more often than not goes so far as to insist that he is, pedagogically, one of them.

I find myself in the same dilemma. Acknowledging my debt to the methods and insights of the new critics, I am nevertheless undertaking to consider certain ways in which the New Criticism appears to constitute a reactionary force; and I believe it can be shown that there is an organic relation between the critical strategies and the reactionary—and often irresponsible—social attitudes. Congressional committees are not at present competing with each other in intimidating the academic world; guilt by association is not threatening scholars with the specter of the concentration camp today; yet it is not the academic world that has arrested this trend, and it behooves us to consider whether the irresponsibility I have charged has had or can have anything to do with the obvious weakening of liberal opinion in our profession and the division within our ranks that has temporarily enervated our traditional opposition to interfering bigots.

The dilemma itself may be a key to the problem, for it is a position in which a great number of American liberal intellectuals have found themselves as they have contemplated the accelerating deterioration of the American Dream during the twentieth century. It comes from a split that we note between our personal evaluations of people and our view of the programs with which they are associated. Standing upon very much the same ground, ground which

he certainly occupied by right of having cleared and cultivated it himself, Ralph Waldo Emerson confronted the same dilemma and commented upon the status of the American Dream in his day in surprisingly strong language:

Of the two great parties which at this hour almost share the nation between them, I should say that one has the best cause, and the other contains the best men. The philosopher, the poet, or the religious man, will of course wish to cast his vote with the democrat, for free-trade, for wide suffrage, for the abolition of legal cruelties in the penal code. . . . But he can rarely accept the persons whom the so-called popular party propose. . . . They have not at heart the ends which give to the name of democracy what hope and virtue are in it. The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive and aimless: it is not loving; it has no ulterior and divine ends, but is destructive only out of hatred and selfishness. On the other side, the conservative party, composed of the most moderate, able and cultivated part of the population, is timid, and merely defensive of property. It vindicates no right, it aspires to no real good, it brands no crime, it proposes no generous policy; and it does not build, nor write, nor cherish the arts, nor foster religion, nor emancipate the slave, nor befriend the poor, or the Indian, or the immigrant. [From "Politics," 1844.]

Thus Emerson says that the best people are on the wrong side—timid and defensive of property—whereas the best ideas are proposed by people who are basically jealous and greedy. Emerson's formulation does not precisely hold for the present issue, but it does indicate the pair of horns between which our issues may be located.

For the crux of the matter is not so much that the new critics themselves are reactionary and fascistic. It is that they have, in certain dramatic perspectives, become associated with reactionary forces. Guilt-by-association, that bugaboo of the academic world, has operated upon our cloistered and scrupulous thinking and has led us to interpret each other's conduct perhaps too elaborately in the light of our religious and political past.

This land was colonized during a time of terrible religious strife. Europe boiled with the Counter Reformation. The zeal of the Puritans in defying what they thought to be the errors of the Church of England was only a reflection of the terror and indignation with which both Puritans and orthodox Anglicans regarded the Church

of Rome. We know that their fears were not without basis, and we know too that this nation was founded and developed under a militant Protestant tradition which prevailed even down through the nineteenth century. Since the time when Emerson (who was a supreme example of this militant Protestantism) formulated the American Dream as an ideal of spiritual growth through increasing knowledge of nature, America has seen the study of nature as a symbol of spirit displaced by the pursuit of science for wealth and power. It has seen the idealism behind science dissipated by the spirit of enterprise until materialism has become a religion itself. If the American Protestant tradition leads into our modern materialism, it is not surprising that conservative intellectuals should blame it therefor and should accuse it of having accommodated materialism until it has become identified with its creature. Nor would our conservative acknowledge that this was a reactionary position. The liberal intellectual, on the other hand, does not identify himself at all with these consequences of Protestantism and materialism.

Using the concept of *perspectives* to clarify these relations, I should like to diagram a line upon which we place a number of representative figures. At one end of this line (the left!) stands the figure of American commercial materialism. To the right of it, the figure of American democratic idealism in the Emersonian tradition. Next the figure of American conservative humanism, leaning toward a medieval religious authority. And next the institution of authoritarian religion. At the two ends we have institutions: business and the authoritarian Church. Between them on the line are types of intellectuals who lean (perhaps very slightly) in one direction or the other. The democratic idealist leans (to the left) through an atmosphere of optimism and progressivism toward the great symbol of material success. The conservative humanist leans (to the right) through an atmosphere of tradition toward the great symbol of religious authority. Now, to consider some of the perspectives involved, let us first look along this line from extreme left to right. The commercial materialist, from his end, does not see very far. He sees two kinds of dangerous long-haired wordmongers who should be kept in line by low salaries and teachers' oaths. Next to

him, and further toward the right, the democratic idealist sees a conservative colleague whom he respects, behind whom (along the line) loom the figures of dogma, then religious authority, and then perhaps the ominous figure of Franco and the dim form of the inquisition or the specter of totalitarianism. Somewhere among these figures he sees Mr. Faulkner uttering his current thoughts on desegregation. The conservative humanist, looking in the other direction, sees looming behind his respected liberal colleague the giant figure of materialism and behind it the enormous menacing shape of Communist totalitarianism.

The background against which he is seen does not define the actual ground upon which either the new critic or his liberal colleague stands. Each stands for an idea of Man. The background, at the opposite ends of the line, is not an idea but an institution; and we know that institutions try to perpetuate themselves by authority and by the use of any force they find necessary. I suspect, furthermore, that the line I have drawn here is not a straight line but a circle which moves away from this humane point, left and right, until it meets again in authoritarian institutions. But when we stand on that line we see it in only one dimension, and whether we be liberals looking toward the right or conservatives looking toward the left we see in the far distance the terrifying bastion of authority. Let us acknowledge that the institution at the right has defined man as the image of God and has developed over the centuries the noblest expressions of brotherhood and spiritual aspiration. Communism, too, if judged by its words alone, has striven for brotherhood and equality, for the liberation of the oppressed into an era of security and individual fulfillment. History has taught us that the Word is not sacred in the hands of its militant propagators.

If this placing of fascist and Church authoritarianism at one end of my line, with communism and American industrial materialism at the opposite end, and the liberal and humanistic intellectuals in the middle, seems odd, I might point out that such an arrangement is not original with me. Versions of the same thing can be found in George Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*, in Norman Mailer's *Barbary Shore*, and in C. V. Gheorghiu's *The Twenty-Fifth Hour*.

Each of these books explores the plight of the free spirit under the threat and pressure of the authoritarian or the industrialized state. In various ways they lump all these authoritarian menaces together and assert that their ultimate intentions of destroying individualism are identical. That is why I have said that although the academic intellectual may see himself on a straight line with these giant menaces looming in either direction over him, the line is in fact a circle whose ends meet where these giant forces stand. Franco, Stalin, Bulganin, and a fourth huge and dangerous robot whose buttons are pushed by a little man named Dies one year and McCarthy the next are within pleasant nodding distance of each other. One might stretch the figure even further and suggest that whereas the intellectual, always committed to accuracy and devoted to minutiae, looks either way along his line and sees the many differences between a Stalin, a Franco, and a McCarthy, these worthies look straight across the circle and regard the tiny, lonely free spirit with fear and contempt.

In the heat of academic controversy each side moves away from its opponent until it has argued itself further into the position for which it was challenged by the other. Robert Gorham Davis, for his *American Scholar* article, was accused of advocating a "party line," —accused, furthermore, by as liberal a gentlemen as Malcolm Cowley. And Allen Tate retires through irony to the point where he asserts that one may reject the American democratic tradition and welcome authoritarian religion without justifying the charge that he is undemocratic. Mr. Davis, meanwhile, has gone so far as to apply the ugly word fascism to T. S. Eliot. When Mr. Davis attacks the new critics they see *him* as an embodiment of American fascism. He in turn wishes that they could embrace the American Dream instead of renouncing what they see as having gone irreversibly materialistic. But for the new critic the noble ideal of man in the image of God is ranged against the brutal distortion of human greatness that we find in the Nazi or Communist state and, frighteningly enough, foreshadowed in the one hundred per cent consumption-minded, nonthinking American that the crudest version of our business intelligence defines as a good citizen.

But what has all this to do with literary criticism and scholarship? Is it not acknowledged that the act of criticism must not be confused with the political life of the critic? I submit that social attitudes and aesthetics are connected in many ways; and I shall try to show some fundamental connections in the area of this problem. And again our literary and intellectual past provides instances which bind agrarianism, the new critics, and Mr. Faulkner into a closely knit tradition.

Looking back to Edgar Allan Poe, we find in his critical writings a repeated linking of poetic beauty with vagueness. He quotes Bacon as saying that there is no beauty "without some *strangeness* in the proportion." Beauty, "which invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears," is independent of Truth and Passion, and yet its supreme value is that it gives us glimpses of "divine and rapturous joys," "an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave," "of that Loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity alone." Thus he rejects Truth on the mundane and practical level and suggests that through Taste alone do we perceive the perfect truth of the Absolute. This is the theme of "Israfel," and the familiar lines of *Al Aaraaf*:

The sound of the rain
Which leaps down to the flower . . .
The murmur that springs
From the growing of grass
Are the music of things—
But are modell'd, alas!

They are "modell'd" in that they are physical embodiments of divine absolutes and therefore betray the imperfections of all embodied ideas.

Such passages, taken along with the obvious tone of much of Poe's writing, affirm that Taste is a faculty independent of what Poe considers the bourgeois, the crass middle-class pursuits of logic and morality. They are of a piece with his aristocratic pose, a pose which, being a caricature of gentility (I mean in his writings), brings out some of its characteristics in bold relief. I see Poe, in laying claim to that Taste with which the sensitive soul is endowed, assert-

ing his aristocratic possession of a faculty that cannot be defined and cannot be logically taught. It is a secret and mysterious possession of the Few. And here, perhaps in caricature, appears a prophetic linking of caste with a taste which in contemporary terms might be called the perception of ironic densities or dimensions But is it a caricature? Is Poe's literary genteelism any more nonsensical or pretentious than Allen Tate's saying that "a political poetry" commits "the heresy of spiritual cannibalism," that the social reader of poetry is "incurably intellectual," that Emily Dickinson "senses" a "metaphysical relation" between the Latin and the Saxon in our language, or that the "quality of poetic vision . . . I have . . . named . . . is not susceptible of logical demonstration. . . . Let us not argue about it. It is here for those who have eyes to see"? [*Reactionary Essays . . .*, pp. x, xi, 22, 111, 112.] (These quotations, by the way, are taken from a volume in which literary criticism, sociology, and philosophy are all mixed together.)

When the new critic assails science and positivism, he does so because he finds it oversimplifying complexities and denying intangibles. Science in order to define must abstract from the ironic densities of the felt experience. Science shrills the bare geometrical bones. The ironic-poetical approach renders a reality of living dimensions, of values in tension Here I see a connection between the aesthetic of irony and the social position expressed by reverence for a traditional society. These traditional values are perceived by a social Taste in the stable but complicated and indefinable tensions of a class society, a society which is more than the sum of its parts and which therefore resists analysis much as it resists change. The social structure is an ironic poem. "Let us not argue about it."

The notion that science oversimplifies and therefore falsifies is clearly expressed by John Crowe Ransom when he says, "The fine Platonic world of ideas fails to coincide with the original world of perception, which is the world populated by the stubborn and contingent objects, and to which as artists we fly in shame. The sensibility manifested by artists makes fools of scientists, if the latter are inclined to take their special and quite useful form of truth

or the whole and comprehensive article." [*The World's Body*, 1. 123.] And in another passage he relates this Platonism to romantic poetry, which "denies the real world by idealizing it: the act of a sick mind." [*Ibid.*, p. ix.] He is interested in the "stubborn and contingent objects" of experience, objects which cannot be reduced to any abstract formulation and which cannot be known apart from their relations to other objects and situations. If the kind of truth which the Platonist or the scientist presents is foolish and sick because it is abstract, it might follow that the truth of art is concrete to the point of being indefinable, complex to the point of baffling analysis, and so many-dimensional that it can be perceived only by intuition, for its dimensions shift in time as well as in space.

We are at this point only a step from the conclusion that truth is a matter of taste which can be felt by the sensitive soul but cannot be arrested for definition or explanation. Poetry is needed because truth is like this. Only poetry can render what is logically or conceptually ineffable. Now if truth is such a mystique, it is so in social as well as literary areas. The values in a traditional society are matters of taste, of atmosphere, of sensed order—of something that can be perceived only on its own narrow and subtle wave length, which is the taste of the sympathetic individual and which produces a quality that has been called "moral certainty of self." The upper classes of course enjoy this quality. So did the ante-bellum Negro, but today (says an author in *I'll Take My Stand*) the Negro problem is one of "rebuilding the white man's confidence in the Negro." This will be done when the Negro has returned to his place in the traditional society: he is happiest—in relation to Whites—on the small farm, where he belongs by "capacity and temperament." [R. P. Warren, "The Briar Patch."] The relation of Negro to White is thus a mystique; it defies analysis because it has the density of an ironic poem. It cannot be attacked, this problem, with concepts like justice or equality or brotherhood because such abstractions do not get at the subtle many-dimensional wholeness of it. The agrarian knows that the proper relation of Negro and White did exist once, for he *felt* it in the atmosphere of a traditional society. Change, in the name of what is called "progress," has tainted that

atmosphere. If I have represented it fairly, this is a reactionary position. This is what Emerson meant when he spoke of a good person expressing a bad idea.

Where social irony expresses the belief that things are too complicated to be set forth systematically, it suggests that perception of this complexity is in itself a considerable accomplishment and that action is too much to expect. One cannot be wise enough to act, but one may contemplate the niceties of the integrated whole. Thus in *I'll Take My Stand*, again, a farmer is admiringly quoted as saying, "As soon as a farmer begins to keep books, he'll go broke as hell." This means that even farmers can get along best with the mystical-intuitive approach. Behind this passage, however, I sense the fear that if the farmer keeps books he may become a successful and even a large-scale farmer, and if he does so the traditional order of his society will suffer radical change. Farmers will organize and become greedy materialists and in time cease to occupy their picturesque place in society. Industrialists who enjoy their trade agreements and their enormous loans from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation speak with similar dismay of farmers who fix their prices and who plunder the government through subsidies. The socio-literary connections which I have indicated here are writ large over the long career of T. S. Eliot, who rejected his native land for one in which he could be Catholic, royalist, and a classicist, and who plainly states in *Notes Toward the Definition of Culture* that we cannot have culture without caste.

The new critic's charge against industrialism is profoundly true. It debauches the arts; it prostitutes education to the machine; it creates leisure for folly. But what will he do about it? Will he take progressive steps against these evils, or will he merely retire into the dream of a traditional society? If the latter, he will act in a manner not ultimately different from the captain of industry. That is, he will defend the status quo. He will talk about the intangible assets of a tradition. He will identify himself with the institutions that protect his own comfort. He will oppose change because it is dangerous to meddle with something so complicated that we cannot understand it. He will, in sum, fall back upon an

ronic contemplation of intangible values. One of the most distinguished of the new critics has written, in terms that I do not entirely understand, of criticism and poetry in connection with ontology; and he has asserted that poetry is a way of knowing. If it is a way of knowing, it may be presumed to constitute a body of knowledge which by its very nature precludes action; it is knowledge for contemplation only.

Our grass-roots demagogues have been, until very recently, carrying the colleges. Anybody who refused to answer the Question was suspected by many of his colleagues, who were unwilling to support in the interests of liberalism a group which would extirpate liberalism. But it did not stop there. It extended to anyone who supported the legally elected government of Spain, in 1937, against an invader supported by other governments. It extended to anyone whom somebody behind the scenes wanted to "get." This threat is as offensive to the new critic or the academic conservative as it is to the academic liberal. Our fear and doubt is that some of the attitudes that I have described may play into the hands of the native bigots—and that the contemplation of ironic dimensions may confuse the well-intentioned and perhaps provide an escape for the fearful and the irresponsible, and allow them to become traditional and self-righteous in their evasions. It is, unfortunately, not a great step from Taste and the Traditional Society to an escape into ironies. And the academic community cannot afford this escape. Today the world is so complicated that only the well-informed can confront it with ethical confidence and stability; so the well-informed have a greater responsibility than ever before to define and clarify the issues and to guide the public in facing them squarely. This must be done if we are to survive as free men. No one can do it for us. Every speech we make and every article we publish contributes its bit to the intellectual atmosphere and thereby produces the intellectual climate of our times. Our influence in forming opinion is tremendous. And if we do not exercise it positively we shall, by default, exercise it negatively.

There is a sentence of Hawthorne's that illuminates our problem: "This is such an odd and incomprehensible world," says Hol-

grave; "and I begin to suspect that a man's bewilderment is the measure of his wisdom." We are dealing with human situations so complicated that no man can reduce them to manageable abstractions. Mechanized, processed, reduced to statistics, we who cherish the human spirit are indeed lost in a "mathematical shroud" (Tate). When the new critics insist upon ironies and intangibles they are esthetically and humanly right. The heart of a man cannot live by calculation alone. But we cannot turn our backs on the physical progress that modern man has made, for to do so is to abandon the instruments of power to hands that will enslave us all. Somehow the lonely figures between the giants of mechanization and authority must draw together, in mutual respect and purpose. In the words of W. H. Auden:

All [we] have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone . . .
We must love one another or die.

Defenseless under the night
Our world in stupour lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages;
May [we], composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.

THE GREAT DESCENT: A VERSION OF FENIMORE COOPER

by Marvin Meyers

FOR A generation and more the Leatherstocking has been ignored by the juvenile public. Meanwhile a body of solemn criticism has convincingly translated Fenimore Cooper from adventure writer into moral commentator. By any rigorous standard Cooper can no more be made into a major thinker than a literary master. The sponsors of the revival have shown good sense in their restraint. Fenimore Cooper, reconsidered as a social critic, does not emerge with unsuspected qualities of originality or subtlety. He offers rather the findings of a crusty, literal intelligence directed to the fate of democratic values in America. In this revised approach to Cooper's work there is, I think, a useful opening for historians of Jacksonian society: a means of access to the ethos of a people undergoing drastic changes in their condition, and so a way of touching the contemporary meaning of such changes.

The evidence is strong that Coo-

per maintained a close attachment to the Democratic party in the Jacksonian years. It was a curious alliance, on face, for the son of a wealthy Federalist squire, a schoolmate of young Jays and Van Rensselaers, heir to a secure place in New York's gentry order. Yet Cooper never felt himself a traitor to his class, or a rebel, or even a critic in any fundamental way; on the contrary, it seemed to him natural that the children of Federalist die-hards should be "almost always decided democrats."

The beginnings of an explanation can be found in Cooper's notion of political locations: "Here," he wrote in *A Letter to his Countrymen*, "the democrat is the conservative, and, thank God, he has something worth preserving." If this were a wholly wrong conception of contemporary politics, and thus a case of misdirected sympathy, there would still be reason to inquire how the error was possible to a man of some judgment. Cooper found his

essential party friends among the Jacksonians, I would propose, because he shared with them an angry sense of loss: the First Republic—the “Doric” age, to import his term for Washington’s character—was going down before a raw company of the commercial *nouveau riche*, the speculative promoters of paper towns and enterprises, the mock democrats of the popular press. Cooper was, in short, a variety of Tory Democrat who gave his qualified allegiance to the party engaged in resisting the principal agents of social and economic subversion. Cooper’s resistance, one must add, took on more adversaries than the Whigs; ultimately it reached a pitch of intransigence which made him seem, in Jonathan Grossman’s telling phrase, “perversely bent on taking his stand against time itself.”

Cooper authorizes the fictional Effinghams (of *Homeward Bound* and *Home as Found*) to speak the important truths about their changing country. When he brings them home in the mid-1830’s, after a dozen years abroad, he has them confront a society much changed, and all for the worse. None disputes the judgment of John Effingham, that in twelve years America has experienced the damage of a century to “all that is respectable and good.” Cooper’s own departure and return correspond roughly to the schedule he gave the Effinghams. Moreover, the observations in the *Notions of the Americans*—perhaps his last generally sympathetic portrait of

his countrymen—antedate by about the same dozen years the bitter Effingham report. The Effingham authority, supported by a double coincidence, seems to me a fair basis for maintaining that Cooper saw American society, between the ’twenties and the ’thirties, in the course of a great descent.

Rarely has there been a foreign traveler so congenial, so educable as Cooper’s made-to-order Continental bachelor in the *Notions of the Americans*; or a guide so apt at saving explanations as Cadwallader, the perfect gentle democrat. No doubt Cooper’s notions of the Americans were more severe—even in the ’twenties—than his credulous guest could learn; for Cadwallader took from his creator a strong sense of what was fit for strangers’ ears. Yet to call the gathering of the *Notions of the Americans* a homely Potemkin tour would underrate the evidence of Cooper’s stiff rectitude, and misconstrue the work. The *Notions* takes the ordinary at its best: chooses comfort, decency, order, common sense, progress as the well-grounded themes of American life in the mid-’twenties. The sketch is useful particularly for the definition of the reference point—the middling standard—from which Cooper measured the deterioration of the ordinary in the later social novels.

The revealing scenes of American life, the stranger learns, are often missed by foreign travelers who, seeking relief from the dullness of “common sense” affairs, develop

a "partiality to the woods" and emphasizes "the fresher and more vivid tints of a border life." The bachelor of the *Notions* is led directly to prime sources of understanding: to the countryside of New England and the Middle States, to New York City, to political Washington. New England, taken in a wide view, appears "a succession of fields, sprinkled with houses, and embellished with little groves." The division of the country into modest freeholds—one hundred acres or so, on the average—each with its own house and outbuildings, gives the effect of a used and peopled landscape. Rural society is highly visible, with its homes crowding upon the roads and its busy traffic along the market routes. The usual village is "beautiful, tranquil and enviable looking"; its qualities: "space, freshness, an air of neatness and comfort."

New England is a touchstone, an influence; but not, of course, a sample of America. The growing points are found in the interior of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio. Everything, in these areas largely settled since the Revolution, is newer, fresher, less complete than in New England. Yet the contrast is mainly in stage and degree. The wilderness toward the West may be a route, an incipient settlement, or simply a strange scene between the points of settlement; it is not a stable component of the common social environment. Once the current of emigration has set toward a favored spot for a time, vestiges of

a barbarous life rapidly disappear. Emigrants bring with them the wants, habits, and institutions of an advanced state of society. Shortly, the nucleus of a village has been formed. From fifty or a hundred such "centres of exertion" spread swarms of men who, in a few years, convert dark forests into populous, wealthy, industrious counties. Soon the village store which sells the cleaving ax stocks abundantly the products of Europe, China, and the Indies. Given thirty or forty years of settlement, a district in the Eastern, Middle, or Northwestern states will show for its dominant figure the middling farmer, one of many thousands of the class of "sturdy, independent yeomen." Probably he will fatten his pork on his own maize, make his cider, kill his beef, raise his own wheat, rye, and flax; and, in short, live "as much as possible on the articles of his own production."

Cooper has an exacting standard for the recognition of a city. He sees only New York—and possibly New Orleans—as something more than provincial towns. His country center seems to have no strong character distinct from its environs. New York is different: not yet a metropolis in the European sense; hardly a source of standards and directives for the country; and yet—somehow—a sign of "the mighty future." Cooper leaves the traveling bachelor vaguely informed about the peculiar principle New York represents in American life. It is

clear only that commercial greatness is impending in the 'twenties, and that extraordinary growth, variety, and mutability are to be the themes of urban life.

America's great moving principles—as the traveler of the *Nations* is made to see—converge upon one object: "the improvement of the species in the mass." Given equality of rights, diffusion of knowledge, and physical abundance as initial conditions, the object is served by an active, unrelenting common sense which directs thought and action toward utility, feelings and manners toward a plain decorum.

Thus Americans, whose literature is dull and bare, whose art scarcely exists, create "more beautiful, graceful, and convenient ploughs" than one can find in all Europe. In this fact lies "the history of the character of the people, and the germ of their future greatness." The same bent toward utility appears in the system of higher education and professional training. The colleges are not organized to turn out profound scholars; instead they administer a light dose of general and diversified knowledge to their students, and return them to the country to mingle in its active employments. In the case of the prospective lawyer, his very deficiencies in formal training lead to a preference for "natural truth" over "quaint follies." The clever lawyer, following a natural career-route into lawmaking, frames measures "not to harmonize with

the other parts of an elaborate theory" but "to make men comfortable and happy."

With each example Cooper moves toward an answer to the stranger's question: Why has so much been effected so quickly and so well with such limited means? The unprecedented material progress of America, Cooper explains, has been the physical record left by a spirit of "activity, enterprise, intelligence, and skill" abroad since the Revolution. A "natural" social order, based upon equality of rights and protection to property, leaves talent, money, enterprise free to work their full effects. Space and natural abundance offer liberal resources and strong incentives to action. A society with no past, no follies, no manners, no legends wants little diversion from its matter-of-fact material tasks. A modest portion of intelligence, distributed through the nation, becomes a floating fund of informed common sense for the mastery of practical problems. A diversified education from worldly experience enlarges the fund, and directs it still more surely toward questions of utility.

In this situation the American is more than self-made according to the usual meaning: he is self-created, out of an image of common sense which all the elements of his past and present suggest to him. He emerges even with a new measure of time to add dignity to his headlong history:

He sees that his nation lives centuries

in an age, and he feels no disposition to consider himself a child because other people, in their dotage, choose to remember the hour of his birth.

American common sense, as the bachelor finds it, is an agency of progress; yet progress is not the sole issue of common sense. Cooper does not lightly buy the well-turned ax at the cost of a threadbare imagination. Some of the costs of American progress he reckons and pays—most easily when he can exchange snob-goods for common comforts; but the whole transaction is possible because progress means an expanding provision for social wants and national growth, under the firm governance of order and decorum. That common sense which grows out of the American condition, and turns so wonderfully to useful work, is precisely the provider of good manners and morals, the preservatives of republican society.

Generally in his books Cooper presses relentlessly the old quarrel of Yorkers with Yankees. The best people—Cadwallader, the Effinghams—are almost inevitably his New York neighbors. Thus the tourist of the *Notions* enjoyed a rare view of Yankee virtues as germinal American qualities, admirable in their way. Nothing noble, gentle, or inspired can be harvested from those rocks; the staple is a plain people, notable for “enterprise, frugality, order, and intelligence.” The general tone of the region is pure-middle, with “its air of abundance, its decency, the absence of want, the

elevation of character, which is imparted to the meanest of its people.” In short, the industrial virtues abound, and they turn out to be not William Graham Sumner’s claws-in-cotton but the fundamental decencies merged with a bright self-interest.

The bachelor finds the perfection of democratic decorum in the conduct of public life, notably at Washington. Here the situation demands that classes associate, and policy demands that quality have its due. Conducting the traveler about Washington, Cadwallader explains why the American majority do not abuse power in Congress. The relatively poor and ignorant choose representatives of respectable (though not lofty) standing and information. Thus the “middling” exercise power; and the best of them do not use public office as a private entry to the aristocracy (in the English fashion), do not desert their order, but return to it and raise the level. Any underrepresentation of the top quality in government—the rich find the road to high office very hard—is well accounted for in the ruling political principle that “the people are left, as much as possible, to be the agents of their own prosperity.” The tasks of government are kept within its capacity.

Sound sense has taught Americans to strengthen social decency by another, less obvious arrangement: by treating women of all social conditions with the respect due “the repositories of the better principles of our nature.” Because women re-

main out of the world, men can safely enter into it.

Retired within the sacred precincts of her own abode, she is preserved from the destroying taint of excessive intercourse with the world. . . . She must be sought in the haunts of her domestic privacy, and not amid the wranglings, deceptions, and heart-burnings of keen and sordid traffic.

Thus the husband can "retire from his own sordid struggles with the world to seek consolation and correction from one who is placed beyond their influence." More important:

The first impressions of the child are drawn from the purest sources known to our nature; and the son, even long after he has been compelled to enter on the thorny track of the father, preserves the memorial of the pure and unalloyed lessons that he has received from the lips, and, what is far better, from the example of the mother.

But the master choice of democratic sense has been the willingness to acknowledge and maintain a natural elite.

The bachelor arrives too late upon the scene to meet the ideal American, although he encounters fair copies, and a society still responsive to the example of Washington. Cooper shows in Washington a "Doric" character, with beauty in the harmony of means and purpose, and grandeur in a "chaste simplicity." His massive and enduring achievement was due solely to greatness of character in the face of adversity. Indeed his

glory resides in the whole tenor of his life, and in "the stern lesson of virtue" left to his community.

The regular rank of American gentlefolk constitutes a class of natural superiors, shaped in the image of Washington. When money, intelligence, and manners merge in a man, public opinion will concede to him full membership in the national élite, with all the advantages appropriate to a republican aristocracy. Birth gives some advantage to an American candidate for social honors; yet it is not mere birth, mere money. In the absence of hereditary privilege, the heir must come up to the parent's mark or forfeit his initial claim.

Once entered in a select circle, the American is by no means forced into "promiscuous association" with his lesser fellows. He has won his choice of company and ought to take it: the country has need of the finer tastes, manners, intellects, and principles cultivated in a kind of social privacy. New admissions are relatively frequent—the marks of aristocracy can be achieved—but not indiscriminate; especially, moral requirements are strict, and social downfall can be more rapid than ascent. Putting social position before every man who can merit it does not level but elevates the nation, inviting all to stretch their aspirations. Cooper dreams of the future nation of one hundred million, graced by some four or five million men of fortune, breeding, and education who would enter full

communion with the quality of the world.

The cultivation of a natural aristocracy demands — permits — no more political provision than the maintenance of a "natural" order: a system of equal rights and security for property. The "gross absurdity" of supposing that any major party in American history has supported radically opposed principles is quickly shown the bachelor. Thus, the current frenzy over Jackson's rise to prominence is, the stranger learns, but another party exercise. This supposedly dangerous general is met and passed as a gentleman of "mild and graceful mien," of "manly and marked features" and "courteous dialogue." The question between Jackson and Adams in 1828 "is altogether one of men." That Jackson appears Cooper's man is a matter of character judgment: the virile qualities of decision, courage, patriotism, joined to simple courtesy and stout independence make the stronger image of the Doric model.

Such is the best face of America in the 'twenties, as Cooper shows it to his acquiescent foreign visitor. Comfort, order, decency prevail under the guidance of common sense. Controlled progress issues from every quarter. Politics maintains essential principles and finds a new leader of the old stamp. The quality sits just high enough above the ordinary to raise its level and temper its effects. The social mood is serene and sanguine. If Cooper

spares the stranger some of his own doubts and fears, he nevertheless guarantees — through the imposing authority of Cadwallader — the essential justice of this view of American democracy, prospering within the bounds of the middling standard.

Cooper did not show the bachelor mirages. He never suggests that great strange forces invaded America between the stranger's departure and the Effingham's (and his own) return. How then did the land of common sense and progress, decency and order become a place good men cursed, lamented, or abandoned? A change in Cooper's private outlook, only tenuously related to general social trends, is one source of answers; and yet I am inclined to try the hypothesis of an essential consistency in outlook.

The ordinary at its best, for all its wholesome aspect, was never taken for the ideal order by Cooper's standards: at best, the sacrifices were real, the achievement limited. More important, society organized by the middling standard was a precarious creation. The bachelor of the *Notions* was amazed to see American society functioning so well because he was a European; still he was a European of Cooper's making and his wonder was, in some part, Cooper's warning that a nation self-made in the image of common sense was a most delicate balance of forces. Cooper's line is thin between the good in the middling standard and the evil in the

"social bivouac" of the 'thirties: a little excess in the parts, a shift in center of gravity, and the ordinary reveals its mangy underside.

In Cooper's analysis the great descent occurs in three main areas: where the rising tempo of mobility disintegrates communal centers of order and decorum; where the related quest for gain turns feverish, despoiling real values in a speculative riot; where false democracy usurps control of opinion and taste, reducing all to a vile cant of equality. Dodge and Bragg are the dominant types of the new order; the Effinghams its vestigial quality; Captain Truck is a relic of strong character in the commons; and the Leatherstocking its legend of pre-social virtue.

"The whole country," John Effingham remarks, "is in such a constant state of mutation, that I can only liken it to the game of children, in which, as one quits his corner another runs into it, and he that finds no corner to get into, is the laughing-stock of the others." Social flux is the essence of American life in the 'thirties, as Cooper found it. What appeared in the *Notions* as a wholesome sign of national vigor must be reviewed in terms of the deepest skepticism.

In a penetrating sociological history of Templeton — the upstate New York seat of the Effinghams, virtually of the Coopers—the writer outlines the pattern of American settlement and its social consequences. Entering a "new country,"

Americans pass through three standard stages of development. At first society is characterized by strong community feeling and interest. The common hazards in the enterprise of settling the wilderness impose mutual efforts and greatly reduce the social "distance" among men of different habits, manners, education. The classes mingle: men—"even women"—break bread together in a way that would be unthinkable in settled circumstances. This primary stage of "mere animal force" is the happiest period in the first century of settlement. Great cares drive out small, good will abounds, neighbors are helpful, and life has the "childhood" qualities of "reckless gayety, careless association, and buoyant merriment."

After this era of "fun, toil, neighborly feeling, and adventure" comes the second major phase of settlement:

. . . society begins to marshal itself, and the ordinary passions have sway. Now it is that we see the struggles for place, the heartburnings and jealousies of contending families, and the influence of mere money. Circumstances have probably established the local superiority of a few beyond all question, and the condition of these serves as a goal for the rest to aim at.

The learned professions take natural precedence—"next to wealth, when wealth is at all supported by appearances." At this point, "gradations of social station" multiply and crystallize, in defiance of equalitarian ideas and institutions.

The least inviting condition of society in a free country above the state of barbarism is met in this transitional phase of settlement. Tastes are too crude to accept regulation; manners are at their worst, exposed to the influence of "the coarse-minded and vulgar." With the arrival of the third stage, "the marshalling of time quietly regulates what is here the subject of strife." Settlement has reached maturity and "men and things come within the control of more general and regular laws." The essential trait of the third phase is not a particular form of civilization but a general settling down: the community assimilates a stable culture conforming to the regional pattern; class distinctions are more or less rigidly established.

In America the first stage of settlement is highly variable in length; often it is quite short. But the second is almost always long, "the migratory habits of the people keeping society more unsettled than might otherwise prove to be the case." Maturity comes only when a great majority of the living generation are regional natives, bred to one cultural standard. Yet:

Even when this is the case, there is commonly so large an infusion of the birds of passage, men who are adventurers in quest of advancement, and who live without the charities of a neighborhood, as they may be said almost to live without a home, that there is to be found for a long time a middle state of society [between the second and the third stage]. . . .

Templeton remains in this ambiguous condition, divided almost equally between the third-generation descendants of the pioneers and a flock of "migratory birds" whose influence "nearly neutralized that of time and the natural order of things." An emerging sense of loyalty to place and tradition among the natives provides the sole restraint upon a "nameless multitude" who briefly occupy real estate and live entirely in the flat dimension of present interest.

Templeton is by no means an extreme example of the social flux which is shaking the foundations of American society. It requires the delicate sensibilities of an Effingham or a Cooper to find the signs of social upheaval in the history of a quiet country village—not one of the boom towns of the period—which has grown at a moderate pace and appears already to be leveling off. New York City is the ultimate case—"a social bivouac, a place in which families encamp instead of troops." New York or Templeton, to Cooper and the Effinghams the principle is the same.

Cousin John Effingham, Cooper's angry prophet of the Yorker gentry whose sharp blade always goes to the heart of matters in the novels, excuses nothing. The "vagrants" of Templeton "fancy everything reduced to the legal six months required to vote." John asks his tolerant relative, Ned, to look about him,

and you will see adventurers upper-

most everywhere; in the government, in the towns, in your villages, in the country, even. We are a nation of changes.

At first this is the expected response of a people engaged in settling an immense forest.

But this necessity has infected the entire national character, and men get to be impatient of any sameness, even though it be useful. Everything goes to confirm this feeling. . . . The constant recurrences of the elections accustom men to changes in their public functionaries; the great increase in the population brings new faces; and the sudden accumulations of property place new men in conspicuous stations. The architecture of the country is barely becoming sufficiently respectable to render it desirable to preserve the buildings. . . .

To all this gentle Ned can only mumble something about exaggeration, and patience, and taking the bad with the good.

While the flux sometimes appears a vast dirty trick of history upon the Effinghams, it is more than that to Cooper. Without the saving remnant of the quality, middling society turns into its ugliest form. The flux turns America loose, brashly to satisfy its natural promptings at the level of its common nature. Above all, that delicate articulation of formal equals according to natural distinctions is lost. Abandoning the Effinghams, society sacrifices itself. The reign of Dodge and Bragg begins.

In the pathology of the great descent, violent economic fevers ac-

company the social flux. Where nothing is fixed, money is everything. Acquisition becomes the urgent, continuous preoccupation of society, until even useful enterprise is forgotten in the universal frenzy of speculation. Although this is not exclusively an urban phenomenon, Cooper finds his richest material in the business district of New York.

Cooper as usual employs the Effinghams as cicerones, this time to introduce their titled English visitor to the improbable wonders of Wall Street in the 'thirties. The tour begins at the office of one of the greater auctioneers, lately become the genius of the "town trade." In the auction salesroom a crowd is bidding wildly for towns and streets, for rocks and bogs, all on the credit of maps, and all "in the fearful delusion of growing rich by pushing a fancied value to a point still higher."

Such weird affairs are beyond the grasp of squire Ned—of course he knows that they are wrong—and John Effingham must interpret the experience. Land mania is but a special instance, for John, of the unlimited extravagance pervading the whole community.

Extravagant issues of paper money, inconsiderate credits that commence in Europe and extend throughout the land, and false notions as to the value of their possessions, in men who five years since had nothing, has completely destroyed the usual balance of things, and money has got to be so completely the end of life, that few think of it as a means. . . . All prin-

ciples are swallowed up in the absorbing desire for gain—national honor, permanent security, the ordinary rules of society, law, the Constitution . . . are forgotten, or are perverted. . . .

The entire community is in the situation of a man who is in the incipient stages of an exhilarating intoxication, and who keeps pouring down glass after glass, . . .

As the tour continues, John describes the further ravages of the economic fever, when it passes from the extremities of land speculation to the ordinary business of the country.

The man who sells his inland lots at a profit, secured by credit, fancies himself enriched, and he extends his manner of living in proportion. The boy from the country becomes a merchant—or what is here called a merchant—and obtains a credit in Europe a hundred times exceeding his means, and caters to these fancied wants; and thus is every avenue of society thronged with adventurers, the ephemera of the same widespread spirit of reckless folly.

John's hope for the country lies only in the prospect that a disease so violent cannot last. But one cannot be confident: not even the Great Fire (1835) in New York's business district, a flagrant Providential warning, had been sufficient to a moral awakening.

Thus is common sense in economic life diverted from utility and decency, enterprise reduced to a fantastic juggling act.

To attempt a *roman de société* with American materials was, in Cooper's mind, a venture which jus-

tified all literary devices to create diversion or entertainment in a drab subject: "more ship" for the Effingham plot, curious characters anywhere. Steadfast Dodge and Aristabulus Bragg cannot be taken for accidents of fiction, however; their appearance in the Effingham novels is determined by grim social reality. Cooper's only literary concession is to do the portraits in the style of caricature.

Steadfast Dodge is without doubt the lowest character in all Cooper's gallery of American defectives. He is granted not even the credit for downright villainy: Dodge is a shapeless mass of ignorance, arrogance, cowardice, avarice, envy, vanity, and servility, mixed with a low cunning—a subhuman absurdity. Cooper no doubt saw in him the Weeds and Webbs and all that tribe of Whig political editors; the editors at any rate seemed to see themselves and struck back in a long campaign of vilification against the author.

Dodge is the pure product of Yankee community and conformity. In a region where individuality was smothered in conventions, caucuses, public meetings, and associations of all sorts, Dodge had, "from his tenth year up to his twenty-fifth, . . . been either a president, vice-president, manager, or committeeman of some philosophical, political, or religious expedient to fortify human wisdom, make men better, and resist error and despotism." He was a master of "the language of

association" and could match any American in his control of such terms as "‘taking up’ — ‘excitement’ — ‘unqualified hostility’ — ‘public opinion’—‘spreading before the public,’ or any other of those generic phrases that imply the privileges of all, and the rights of none."

A habit of speech is in Dodge an element of character. He perceives the world entirely in the terms of popular majorities and minorities, of "streaks of public opinion" identified by party labels.

So much and so long had Mr. Dodge breathed a moral atmosphere of this community-character, and gregarious propensity, that he had, in many things, lost all sense of his individuality; as much so, in fact, as if he breathed with a pair of county lungs, ate with a common mouth, drank from the town-pump, and slept in the open air.

The image is deceptive, however, if it suggests some organic bond between Dodge and his fellows. He shares their limitations of mind and spirit; but he communicates with them only in a mechanical, manipulative way, seeking favor and fearing rejection. Only in the protective environment of "party-drill" has Dodge the nerve to defy anyone: "in all other things he dutifully consulted every public opinion of the neighborhood." Self-distrust bred a "rabid desire" for universal approval, especially for the sanction of his natural superiors; for Dodge did vaguely sense his own deficiencies. He would like nothing better

than acceptance by the Effinghams; he approaches them full of the "distrust and uneasiness" of the "vulgar and pretending" when faced with "the simplicity and natural ease of the refined." The Effingham set amuse themselves briefly with this windbag, and then dismiss him. Yet they cannot ignore—or forgive—his power to corrupt opinion, for Dodge and his type dominate the American press. Under their influence liberty is confounded with personal envy and "the jealousies of station"; self-interest is installed in place of public duty. The gravity of the Dodge menace is obvious in the United States, where government has become a gross "press-ocracy."

Dodge is sheer cant done up into a man; Aristabulus Bragg is a different and better issue of the same social stock. Bragg is quick-witted, prompt in action, enterprising when he has no stake and wary when he does. He is ready to turn hand, heart, and principles to anything that offers an advantage. Nothing is above his aspiration, nothing too menial to do. Expert in legal and business affairs, Bragg is also a smooth talker (in accents uncouth and provincial), a deliberate self-improver with his smattering of classics, dancing, medicine, and divinity. One Effingham sees in him "an amusing mixture of strut, humility, roguery, and cleverness"; another finds

a compound of shrewdness, impudence, common-sense, pretension, humility, cleverness, vulgarity, kind-

heartedness, duplicity, selfishness, law-honesty, moral fraud, and mother-wit, mixed up with a smattering of learning and much penetration in practical things. . . . Mr. Bragg, in short, is purely a creature of circumstances. . . .

Any thought that Bragg deserves to be taken in as apprentice to the real quality, in the old hope of recruiting aristocracy from the middle ranks, is quickly scotched by Cooper and the Effinghams. John, the most candid of the lot, classes Bragg with "a valuable house-dog." Edward, without insults, maintains a wide distance between client and lawyer. And Eve Effingham—Cooper's candied vision of the good in American civilization—unvoluntarily prolongs Bragg's cautious suit through the length of a novel simply because she cannot recognize that such a creature could hope for her hand. Whenever Bragg comes too close, he acts the clumsy oaf, to the annoyance or amusement or indifference of the Effinghams. Cooper calls Bragg a gentleman, with an apology: "for we suppose Aristabulus must be included in the category by courtesy, if not of right." He calls Bragg, too, the epitome of the best and worst in a large class of Americans: Bragg is the new man of pell-mell, the perfect adaptive organism for a situation without rules or bounds.

Cooper winds up the Effingham tale with a series of matches, each character to his kind: Dodge gets none; Sir George takes Grace, the imperfect American heiress—about

right for a mere English baronet; Paul Powis (John Effingham's lost son) alone is worthy of Eve. Bragg wins Eve's French maid and goes West, where Aristabulus will practice law, or keep school, or go to Congress, or saw lumber, or do whatever comes to hand, while his new wife will set up as dressmaker and French teacher. In the end, Bragg is perhaps as much a mystery to the Effinghams as they are to him. They know certainly what he is not. But what he *is*, and how to come to terms with him, as the new American, remain a puzzle. As Eve (always so sure in her judgment) confesses:

He seems so much in, and yet so much out of his place; is both so ruse and so unpracticed; so unfit for what he is, and so ready at everything, that I scarcely know how to apply terms in any matter with which he has the smallest connection.

The perspective of the Effingham books is bounded on one side by Ned, on the other by John, with Powis, Eve, and the author comfortably between. Bragg, Dodge, Truck, and the others are just what Effinghams see when, reluctantly, they look out upon America. Each general fault is the contrary of an Effingham virtue. In short, we know the quality from all the previous discussion, and only a little more remains to be said of their traits and of their function.

The Effinghams are everything that the elect of the 'twenties aspired to, with the added perfection

of a cosmopolitan finish. Everything about them—their possessions, their appearance, their style of life, their manners—is a beautiful blend of Continental grace and republican simplicity; everything is keyed to quiet elegance, impeccable dignity, pure refinement. It would be as shocking to discover an Effingham acting in bad taste as it would to catch Natty Bumppo losing an Indian trail.

The Effinghams are perfect, passive, almost disused ornaments of the republic. They hold their example before a society which is, at least, envious; at most, awed; but on no account inspired to imitation. They will enforce the laws and remind the presumptuous that the power of the "re-public" is still more awful than the power of the public. But no substantial force in American life runs in their direction. The mating of Effingham cousins is Cooper's final stroke, to isolate the vestige of American quality in purity, and concede the active world to the rising Braggs.

It is true that the Effinghams win their symbolic Point battle and prove that some common sense, honesty, and prudence remain in the public when it can break loose from its misleaders. Yet it is hard to find a hopeful figure anywhere beneath the Effinghams. The best in the commons is Captain Truck, a bluff original of an obsolete breed, raised on catechism and piety, respectful to his betters, whose virtue has been preserved in salt water. Signifi-

cantly, Truck and a still crustier remain, the old "Commodore" of Lake Otsego, are the only links Cooper provides to the one social hero deemed worthy of the republican succession, Andrew Jackson. The antique captain agrees with the superannuated Commodore that Old Hickory is a man's man: "Tough, sir; tough as a day in February on this lake. All fins, and gills, and bones."

Dodge and Bragg may well be Whigs for Cooper, yet of the widely prevalent social type, false democrat, bred by the changing American climate. (My hunch would be that Yankee Dodge is a Whig, and Bragg—a popular leader in strongly Jacksonian Otsego-Templeton — a Democrat.) Against them Cooper musters only two old deviants to vote for Jackson, and the seceded Effinghams to place their veto on the whole mess.

The Effingham quality is a frozen vestige; Jackson is a distant, individual champion of the Doric Republic. Cooper's last resort for a sign of American quality is the passing echo of a Yorker legend. The gentlefolk of Templeton, taking in the natural beauties of Lake Otsego, come upon the old site of Natty Bumppo's hut. Each in turn reaches out his hand to acknowledge another, long extinct strain of virtue. Sophisticated John Effingham is—in a rare moment—almost tenderly affected by the reminiscence: Alas! . . . the days of the "Leather Stockings" have passed away. He pre-

ceded me in life, and I see few remains of his character in a region where speculation is more rife than moralizing, and emigrants are plentier than hunters.

This brief encounter with legend is more, I think, than a quaint interlude in the tale. In one respect, Natty is the masterpiece of the pre-social democracy of the woods: the perfection of active competence and moral purity which natural experience can draw from innate genius. The democracy of the clearing shows no capacity for shaping his successor. For the tasks of action society must turn to Aristabulus Bragg. As always in his novels—Henry Nash Smith has made this point most effectively—Cooper does not permit the Effinghams to weigh the merits of their own brand of civilized excellence, perfected in retirement, against the natural and active vir-

tues of the Leatherstocking. Both, at any rate, are banished from the settlements: one to the remote prairie, the other behind the walls of privacy.

Long before the Effinghams made their *pro forma* stand against the invasion of their picnic grounds, satisfying their principles and changing nothing, Natty Bumppo had abandoned Lake Otsego. As settlers infested his woods Natty would—according to local legend—notch a pine for each arrival, until “reaching seventeen, his honest old heart could go no further, and he gave the matter up in despair.” The eccentric ancient, the “Commodore” of the lake, delivers the final tribute: “They may talk of their Jeffersons and Jacksons, but I set down Washington and Natty Bumppo as the two only really great men of my time.”

Idiom

MILDRED WESTON

Trained lips are quick to spell
a literal intent.
The vocal syllables
exact and eloquent
enunciate at will
with tongue grown versatile.

But lacking word or rule
by which true course is led,
unuttered miracles
fall disinherited—
caught in the breath that waits
still inarticulate.

The stifled cry of sleep
locked in a dreamer's throat,
the gesture buried deep
below the spoken note,
in loss, are forced to reach
beyond a lingual speech.

When driven, they must break
the walls that hold them dumb,
and, straining, overtake
a freer idiom
in voices meant to sing
released through flute and string.

THE MEETING OF EAST AND WEST

by *Syed Iqbal Ali Shah*

THE East is East and the West is West," sings Kipling with characteristic felicity and charm, and millions of people take the dictum to heart, feeling that the twins cannot, will not meet. But if one were to discuss the point with deeper sympathy and understanding, it will be found that both in logic and in fact this trite saying is neither correct nor helpful to the democratic temper of modern age. Whatever might be said about the relations with Europe and America of the countries lying east and south of Suez, it is completely true that Asia—and particularly my country of Afghanistan—and the West not only have met long ago but continue to meet in the realm of thought and inspiration.

In surveying this kinship of Afghanistan with Europe and America, one sees a much closer relationship in literature and poetry between the two than in any other single aspect of this contact. Here the meeting of the two waves of culture have, indeed, never been abrupt, nor has any attempt been made to overwhelm the other. Rath-

er, it has been a marriage of equals, mind wedded to mind.

In the beginning, the synthesis may have been partial, a mere suggestive phenomenon, but soon the borrowing became more liberal, the appreciation more cordial and profound, until, at the end, the reception of Oriental ideas into European and American prose and poetry produced that wonderful interaction to which I have alluded above.

During the three periods of European literary output—the medieval, the renaissance, and the romantic—even the casual contact of European literature with the East awakened something dormant in every period; hence, that which was essentially "native" to European thought and mind sprang forth with greater force and energy when fertilized by Eastern ideas. Note what Noaman the Wise says in the words of Adi Bin Zaid, and compare it with the feelings and musings of Shakespeare:

Consider thou Khawarnaq's lord—and
oft,
Of heavenly guidance cometh vision
clear—

Who once, rejoicing in ample realm,

Surveyed the broad Euphrates, and
Sadir;
Then sudden terror struck his heart,
and cried:
"Shall man, who deathward goes, find
pleasure here?"

The great English bard speaks of the same ideas in the words of once mighty Wolsey, as follows:

Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness,
This is the state of Man, today he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, tomorrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is ripening,—nips his root.

The same theme is taken up by our own saintly poet, Hakim Sanaee, who, after a rich life of Ghazni Court, turned to reality, to Truth—which is God—and sings:

Make not this body and life thy abode;
For long no man tarries here!
But walk upon thy course of Eternity,
And Unveil the Bride of the Book,
Anchorited in the midnight prayer,
leaving
Wiles of earth to viles of men,
And fly to loftier realms of thought
and life—
Of reality and Unfolding Light.

The celebrated American poet, Carl Sandburg of Illinois, a one-time harvest hand and a soldier of fortune in the Spanish-American war, in his inimitable poem "The

People Will Live On," writes very truly to the heart of Oriental people. He says:

Time is a great teacher.
Who can live without hope?
In the darkness with a great bundle
of grief
the people march
In the night and overhead a shovel of
stars for
Keeps the people march!
Where to? What for?

The Ghazni poet, as if prereading the mind of the American poet of our own day, and writing no less than 800 years ago in southern Afghanistan, observed the same thing, and seemed almost to reply to Sandburg. With the difference of centuries between the two, it seems uncanny that the two minds spoke to each other, and proves that East and West are in tune in many ways. The Afghan addressed himself to the American in the following terms:

Time is like the infant's nurse,
Placing all in a single cradle
With loving hands,
And nourishing all as
kindred all!
And so life's panorama flows on
To Eternity—
Men and women thus, descending into
oblivion
May no longer grieve,
Where and whither may go their sons
with Time,
For knowing and knowing well—
The Fondling hand of Time
ever rocks the cradle.

The English poet Shelley should really be called saintly, despite what his European critics have said about

him; the loftiness of his poetical mind cannot be judged by nonesthetic values. In his poem "The Witch of Atlas," for instance, to us Orientals, he not only strikes one dumb with his grace and charm, but carries the soul to higher aspects of thinking, to that which is mystical and which can be perceived only by the inward eye of a thinker — a thinker wedded to great spiritual attainments. I quote a brief passage, where the English singer describes the lady of his vision. Note the magic of his words, in which atmosphere rises to vistas of the occult.

Which when the lady knew, she took
her spindle
And twined three threads of fleecy
mist, and three
Long lines of light, such as dawn may
kindle
The clouds and waves and mountains
with; and she
As many star-beams, ere lamp can
dwindle
In the belated moon, wound skillfully;
And with these threads a subtle veil
she wove—
A shadow for the splendour of her
love.

Few poets, if any, have employed this metaphor of "light" with greater fantasy and charm than did Shelley except it be Omar Khyyam, who said, ". . . And caught the Sultan's turret in a noose of light," a supreme effort in depicting the dawn.

If one were to compare the mystical aphorism of that Grand Master

of Sufi poetry, Jalaluddin Bulkhi (otherwise known as Mounlana Rumi) with Shelley, one would not only compare the two in points of language and metaphor, but in that which is concerned with spiritual message. It is an essential element common to both the Afghan and the English poet. The Moulana's "Masnavi," naturally enough, is a thing of a very sublime order in spiritual allegory and symbolism; and whatever may be said about Shelley, there is no doubt that he marches very close to the excellence which the Afghan had attained and kept. A mere rendering of a few lines of the "Masnavi" will illustrate this point. Our Bulkhi poet symbolized the reed flute with the life of man — man in love with Truth, with Eternity and thus with God, and sings in the name of the flute, which has been cut from the field, and is being used by a player. Here are the words:

Since I, the Flute, have been cut from
my parent tree,
I wail and sing to the four winds—
of separation from that of which I am
a part.

Like unto that Flute we are,
Like unto it we have two mouths;
One end is in the mouth of the
Creator,

The other blows the song
Towards the children of men;
Of love and warning I sing,
Says the Flute,
And I put the world into ecstasy,
Into the ecstasy of a mystic's song!

In poetry and song, as in other forms of culture on the higher plane,

East and West have met long ago, and are meeting every day, before the seeing eye. They have a common heritage, a common purpose, which is the call of mankind's final feelings; how truly the great American Emerson puts it when speaking

of poets: ". . . a poet is a complete man, who apprises us not of his wealth, but of the commonwealth." We share in that commonwealth of world culture, where East and West are brothers to each other.

Art is a human activity having for its purpose the transmission to others of the highest and best feelings to which men have arisen.

—COUNT TOLSTOI

THE BHUTAM

by *Robin White*

AS A RULE my parents encouraged us to take a positive attitude towards everything. This was not infrequently the cause of many a heated family exchange, there being nothing so exasperating to a positive person as another of his own kind. But looking back, I can appreciate both the necessity and wisdom of such a policy; for as the children of missionaries to Meigudy, one of the lesser and more remote outpost stations in South India, we were constantly beset by unusual situations which, if avoided or approached negatively, would have left us with nothing to fall back on.

Of the four of us, Barney was perhaps the most outgoing in his ways. To look at him you would never guess it. He was a skinny, pensive little boy with large wistful eyes, a densely freckled face, and blond hair so fine and perpetually snarled that it stood up on top of his head like spun-sugar candy. But because he was younger than the rest of us he was left up to his own devices the better part of the day; and this, more than anything else, was what fooled you: it gave you the impression that he was withdrawn when in fact he could be infuriatingly obstinate.

Thus it was in a sense inevitable and entirely in keeping with his character for him to take the step he did the night he met the bhutam on the stairs. Now, among our Indian friends it was common knowledge that bhutams, or ghosts, inhabited the periphery of the mission compound and also many other lonely spots around Meigudy. One was known to frequent the banyan tree not over a stone's throw from the bungalow, and another was always being a nuisance on the path near the cornfield where the fort used to stand. In a village like Meigudy where the ever-present shadow of the past lurks among the many abandoned temples, broken stone images, and crumbling lines of masonry—scattered ruins of a once magnificent civilization turned to wilderness—it is only natural for

people to think of the bhutams of that vanished era as lingering on to roam the old familiar places. Some of the Christians even made occasional obeisance to them in order to keep them pacified and neutralize their ability to do evil. And despite Father's persistent disapproval of the practice, many considered it simply a matter of playing safe to leave an offering once in a while at the known spots. No one, however, would have thought possible the existence of a bhutam in the bungalow itself, because the bungalow was looked upon as the local stronghold of a religion incompatible to the many demons in the Hindu hierarchy. It took inquisitive little Barney to nose one out, and when he did he told us about it in his customary, solemn, self-assured way, announcing it at the supper table.

"There's a bhutam on the stairs," he said.

We all heard him, but at first none of us paid any attention. It is a fact that positive people have less to say than others. Being one, I can vouch for this. However, they tend to use a superfluous amount of verbiage to put what they have to say across, and with us it was an exercise in lingual gymnastics just to get a word in edgewise at meal times. Barney usually excluded himself from these struggles, and consequently no one was willing to yield any ground to him now.

"I said there's a bhutam on the stairs!" he repeated loudly.

The butler, standing near the sideboard with arms folded, started visibly, and in the candlelight that glinted dully off the silver service, glassware, linen, and ornamental brass crowding the rosewood table, I could see his eyes widen as he glanced around at our shadows, distorted against the dead-white backdrop of the plaster walls. Night in India is a time when past and present become strangely equalized, and it is not difficult on a warm, windless evening, when the delicate fragrance of incense mingles with the slightly melancholy music that reaches the ear from a distance, to experience a certain floating sensation of confusion between the real and the imagined.

Aaron, sitting bare-chested and perspiring next to me, was the first to comment. "Do tell," he said with exaggerated disconcern.

"Don't you know there aren't any bhutams?" Clare teased.

"There was this one," said Barney.

"Oh, how do you know?" I asked, angrily tearing a piece of

bread in order to mop my plate with it. Being superstitiously inclined myself, I was annoyed that Barney should bring up the subject of ghosts just before bedtime.

Father hissed at me. "Samuel!" he said. Mopping the plate was bad manners.

"I could see him," Barney replied.

"In that case," said Clare, "why hasn't anyone else?"

"You could if you wanted to," Barney told her.

"Then it wasn't a ghost," said Aaron, "because you can't see ghosts."

"I could see this one," Barney retorted. "I could hear him all right, too."

"Well, now, that's nice, dear," said Mother, seeing that we were ganging up on him. "I hope you make friends with it. There's no sense being negative about anything, you know." She motioned for the butler to begin clearing away the dishes, and the subject of bhutams was swiftly dismissed while we rushed on to other arguments.

I supposed that if we were to have a bhutam in the bungalow the stairs would be the most logical place. Perhaps I ought to explain that in Meigudy our bungalow was referred to as The Palace, even though it no longer looked like one, because in the 1300's it had been part of Pandiya Raja's summer residence. Why anyone would deliberately choose to spend any season in Meigudy has been a perpetual source of amazement to me. It is near nothing; the land about it is desolate and, except for the paddy fields and island topus of cocoanut palms, overgrown with thorn trees that spring from red clay to crowd the barren outcroppings of white ant mounds and monstrous bald rocks. Some say that in Pandiya's day the air was considered beneficial to those suffering from respiratory ailments, pointing to the many stone spittoons and outdoor resting places as ample evidence that the old Raja suffered from a first-class wheeze of some sort. Others claim that he was a man of passion and came here because of a woman, or that he was one of those aging monarchs who refused to die at an appropriate time and was retired for political reasons to the most inaccessible spot in the kingdom. What-

ever the motive, come here Pandiya did, and it is largely due to this fact alone that Meigudy still lingers on the map today.

When my parents first came to Meigudy to reorganize an earlier mission that had failed, all that remained of the Raja's estate was a tumble-down wing of the palace which was ceded to the mission. Of course the whole structure had undergone extensive revision, first to make it livable and then to remove the images and other Hindu characteristics considered unacceptable by the mission purchasing authorities who came to inspect it. The only feature still recognizably Hindu was the staircase leading up to the second floor, and this was really something to behold. Fashioned out of teak and rosewood, ornamentally carved with scenes depicting the Hindu epics, the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, and once inlaid with ivory and gold, the stairs completely filled the spacious front hall, crowding the corner Mother reserved for her office. Although they turned and twisted about in an amazing complex of angles and curves and subdivisions, now jutting out on a little platform with a window overlooking the grounds, now opening onto a seat for the Raja to rest when he grew short of breath, the stairs as a whole had been beautifully and skillfully blended into an octagonal pattern. To walk up and down them was an experience, a revelation if you will, giving you something of a glimpse, through that ghost-like veil of time, of the old Raja himself, an eccentric, corpulent lover of luxury who needed a multitude of grips and handles and resting places to ascend the stairs which he should not have been climbing in the first place but which he insisted on doing anyway just to spite everyone and prove his virility. He was also a patron of the arts, but, withal, a fussy, cantankerous old libertine given to indulging his senses in the many passionate scenes of love and hatred and wild revels carved for his amusement.

The wood, however, now well over six hundred years old, was full of worm holes and extensively eaten by white ants, and every time someone went up or down them you could hear the strain all over the bungalow. Mother and Father had occasionally discussed the idea of installing new stairs and would probably have had the

old set torn down long ago had it not been for the weird fascination they exerted upon us. It actually seemed a shame to touch them, and you always felt obliged to lower your voice and tread respectfully when you entered the hall, as if by virtue of antiquity the place had become sanctified.

For me it was not difficult to see how Barney might very well have uncovered a bhutam there. At the same time I don't think any of us gave a second thought to Barney or the stairs until the following day, and the only reason we did so then was largely incidental. Under one of Aaron's speedy descents to the breakfast table, the upper landing gave way and sagged three inches. This called for some immediate action, and as a result breakfast was the occasion for another furious argument.

The odd thing about the stairs was that they seemed to involve each of us personally, like a matter of conscience. Aaron, who was the staunch supporter of things Indian despite their conflict with the mission, adamantly insisted that we should send to the city for a first-class asari, or carpenter, to take the stairs apart and rebuild each piece. I was for maintaining the status quo and letting the stairs seek their own end without interference, because I hated to see anything new done. It even burned me to have Mother change her hair style. Clare was a stickler for convenience and wanted the stairs torn down, the best pieces saved for souvenirs, and an elevator installed with ropes to raise and lower it the way she had seen down at the Municipal Building in the city. And Mother and Father were simply after finding the path of least resistance. Barney was not asked for an opinion, nor did he venture one of his own accord. He was too busy with the bhutam.

In the afternoon the local asari was summoned for professional advice. We stood around the high-ceilinged, echoing hallway and watched him go over the stairs to check the construction. When he finished he came down scratching his bare chest. He did not say anything right away but fixed himself a piece of betel.

"It is quite hopeless, Dorai," he said bluntly in Tamil to Father. "No one today could repair a set of stairs like that."

We all began protesting and after a bit of discussion, in which everyone got excited except the asari, it appeared that restoration or repair was quite out of the question because the whole thing had been assembled like a jigsaw puzzle in an intricate and cleverly designed set of interlocking pieces held together only by their own weight. We were thus faced with a limited choice: either to shore up the stairs until they collapsed with age, or tear them down and build something new. The announcement came as such a blow that none of us could say anything. Presently Father told the asari that he would give the matter his careful consideration and send for him again when he had reached a decision.

That night Barney was so late for supper that Father got in a huff about it.

“Didn’t you hear your father call?” Mother asked.

“Yes,” said Barney, dawdling in. “I was busy.”

“Busy with what, boy?” said Father.

“With what Mother told me to do.”

“I’m afraid I don’t understand, dear,” said Mother. “I can’t recall telling you to do anything special.”

“You told me to make friends with the bhutam,” Barney said.

“Oh,” said Mother vaguely, remembering. She smiled, but what Barney had latched on to came a little too close to our concern for the future of the stairs to be amusing.

“Nuts,” said Aaron. “You still harping on that?”

“He’s a nice chap, the bhutam,” Barney said, speaking to Mother. “I asked him if he’d like to be friends and he said yes.”

Clare snorted. “I suppose he told you his name.”

“It’s Venkatasami,” said Barney. “I call him Uncle.”

“Well, I’m glad you made friends with him, dear,” Mother said benignly. “If you have to find a bhutam on the stairs it’s always nice to be friendly instead of afraid. After all, he may be a very lonely ghost.”

Father said, “Hazel!” because it sounded dangerously Hindu to him and he didn’t like catering to superstitions.

“It’s all right, Ernest,” she said. “I just don’t want him to be afraid of ghosts.”

"Pooh!" said Clare. "Small chance. I think he ought to get a spanking for being such a liar."

"What sort of a ghost is he?" I asked.

"He's Hindu," said Barney. "I saw his caste mark."

"Then I can prove you're wrong," said Aaron, seeing that I had laid a trap for Barney, and jumping in to finish it off. "A Hindu ghost wouldn't come around here."

Barney's reply was as prompt as it was unexpected. "This one would," he said, "because he built the stairs. He built the stairs for the Raja, and the Raja killed him so he could never build anyone else another like it."

All at once I felt a chill tingle down my spine as if someone standing unseen beside the table had suddenly brushed past me into the hall. Oddly enough, no one seemed inclined to offer Barney an argument. Instead, after a brief silence Mother paved the way for ending the discussion with another "That's nice, dear," and Father polished it off by stating that ghosts were not real because they were only imagined, and there was no sense arguing about figments of the imagination.

Barney did not attempt a rebuttal. I think we were all under the impression that his silence meant he had conceded the point. None of us was aware of how wrong we were until the next day. Barney spent all that morning on the stairs mumbling to himself. When the butler rang the gong, he appeared promptly. There was a look of utter confidence on his face as he waited, head erect, through the saying of grace, and then, before Father could introduce the subject of the stairs, Barney said, "Do you believe in God, Father?"

"Why, what a question to ask!" Mother said. "Of course we all believe in God!"

"I mean, do you know what He is?"

Father, unsuspecting, cleared his throat preparatory to expounding on the subject. "We think of God as a spirit—" he began.

"Like a ghost?" Barney interrupted.

Mother was first to sense the drift of the conversation. "What are you getting at, dear?"

"I was talking with Uncle Venkatasami," he said, "and he wants to know why, if you believe in the Holy Ghost, you can't believe in just a simple ordinary bhutam, too."

It was an argument that touched home so swiftly and surely that none of us could believe Barney had thought it up. Father pointed a finger at Barney. "There's a difference," he said, "between God and ghosts. Your mother and I would be glad to talk it over with you sometime if you're bothered by it."

Again Barney seemed willing to be put off without argument, and again we were all under the impression that his general lack of concentration would carry him on to other fields. And of course we were again mistaken. During the meals that were to follow, he continued his line of attack, revealing a persistence that was as stubborn as it was unsettling. Looking up with those wide, innocent eyes of his, he would ask gravely if we believed in Heaven. And when we said yes, he would ask what was it—a place where dead people go? If people had a life after death, what were they—ghosts? Then why couldn't there be Hindu ghosts as well? And so on and on. He preferred to take little steps, never varying his argument greatly or pushing himself too far, but always gaining ground.

The fault actually lay with us. We didn't begin to take Barney seriously until too late. By that time differences of opinion had arisen amongst us, and the stairs themselves drifted into the background. Even then it would have been better had we yielded to Barney, ghost or no ghost. But we were all aggressively given to positive views, and Barney's persistence led us on to some really scorching debates. He simply would not be put off, either by argument, persuasion, or threat.

Under pressure of necessity, my parents were finally forced to abandon serious discussion and resort to artifice. They called us into the living room one evening before supper while Barney was still upstairs and told us that they had a "little plan" and that no matter what was said or done, we were to keep our mouths shut and not interfere. It was the first time either of them had ever told us to withdraw from a fight, and we filed soberly into the dining room to wait for Barney.

When he came down, Father said: "Your mother and I would very much like to meet Venkatasami and discuss these various matters with him directly. He seems to be an intelligent, sensible fellow, and there's no reason why he shouldn't be friends with the rest of us, too."

"I'll ask him about it," said Barney, as if he had expected such a request. He went out and came back swiftly. The answer was simple and direct: "Uncle Venkatasami says no."

"But why, dear?" Mother asked, sensing they were on the right track. "Is he afraid to meet us?"

"No," said Barney. "But he says you don't believe in him. You only want to tear down the stairs."

"Oh," said Mother. "I didn't know you cared. You never told us."

"It's Uncle I'm thinking about," Barney said. "If you tear down the stairs he will have to go away."

After much prolonged discussion, my parents at last persuaded Barney that they would not tear down the stairs if Uncle would reveal himself to us where we could talk matters over.

"All right," Barney agreed. "I'll ask him to come down." He said for us to sit where we were while he went and explained the situation to Uncle.

I felt almost sorry as Barney went out, and I wondered how he would go about persuading his ghost to put in a personal appearance. For several minutes we could hear him walking back and forth on the landing in the dark, and then, slowly, his footsteps sounded on the stairs. We heard his progress along the hall to the door, and for one breathless moment none of us was sure what really would happen.

Then Barney was there in the doorway, and I saw that he was empty-handed. What was worse, I could see that he knew he had come alone. He stood dismally waiting, not knowing what to do or say; for in the light and in the presence of the real world, Uncle Venkatasami had deserted him.

Clare was first to laugh, and we laughed with her—the laughter of relief. Looking at us, Barney understood that he had been tricked.

The expression on his face was first one of anger, then grief. "You're going to pull down the stairs, aren't you?" he said.

Mother leaned over to him. "We have to, dear. They aren't safe any more."

He nodded glumly. Without Uncle he no longer felt the same way about the stairs. It was also apparent that none of us felt the same, or would, after that; and if the stairs were to be torn down and replaced, the feat would be accomplished without our opposition.

Barney climbed slowly into his chair, large bright tears starting in his eyes. At the sight of him so woeful, we stopped laughing abruptly. I don't believe any of us had much spirit for laughter then anyway. For that moment's hesitation on our part, that moment before Barney appeared alone in the doorway when we all held our breaths for fear that he would be right, was too pronounced for comfort or denial. Old Venkatasami, despite our refusal to admit of him, had been there in our presence, a spirit unseen but felt, and Barney, in his own inexorable way, had got the best of us.

THE PRETTY SURPRISE

by *Norma Tomlinson*

SEE, see, Victoria!" the little girl shouted, stumbling on a shoelace, dust circling about her ankles, and long hair, half braided, falling across her eyes. She dropped down on the ground, gasping a little, and, kicking out skinny knees, tugged at the flowered sleeve. "Look at me! Look at me!" The woman peered into the oven, squinting her eyes, leaning close to blow the coals to fire. She was counting in her head the best morning to walk to Bernalillo to dig the clay for Lugarda's lesson. But every morning there was something—the bread today, the squashes and snap beans to weed tomorrow. And she kept putting it off too, the days were so hot. "See what I have brought you. Won't you turn around and look?" The child rolled over, scooped one hand into the pot of creamy dough, and slowly licked the length of her fingers.

Victoria blew steadily into the oven until flames reached out to the edges of her ruffled skirt. Then she lifted the flat stone beside her and pressed it hard against the oven doorway. "There," she said, turning to her little sister, reaching up to smooth the black hair away from the child's forehead. "Ah, Lugardita, what do you always bring me from school every day?" Closing her eyes and sucking in both lips, she shook her head so that silver earrings pulled down the tips of her ears. "Let me see. You brought the number 5's yesterday, and a picture of the new jump rope with Felipita leaping into the air, and you brought me"

Lugarda laughed against the back of one hand, holding the new thing behind her. "You will never guess."

"Yes, I can." Victoria smiled and her eyebrows drew together. She rubbed the jeweled finger of one hand along the narrow bridge of her nose. "You bring the number 6's today and a picture of the schoolhouse with blinds half pulled and the gate swinging open."

"Close your eyes, Victoria. Close your eyes tight. You will

never guess what I have brought you." The child leaned back on her heels and then with a quick motion and a half-suppressed giggle placed the surprise on her sister's lap. She squatted before her, pressing her arms around her knees.

Victoria opened her eyes and looked down at a pine branch. Lugarda had cut wings from paper and tied them to the needles with string. Victoria leaned closer to touch an orange butterfly spotted with yellow moons. She moved the wobbly black feelers. Purple butterflies ridged with green clung to the lower branches, and the smaller one below dangled loose with two glittering gold eyes.

Victoria straightened the stiff paper wing. "Who told you to do this, Lugarda?" she asked. "Did your teacher give it to you to do?" Her face looked away, eyes fixed on the tops of houses and the mesa behind turning colors with the sun. Lugarda's hand traced a circle in the sand. She drew eyes, nose and circle mouth inside before she spoke. "I thought of it. It seemed such a pretty thing to do, and I made it in free period instead of coloring in the book."

Victoria held the pine bough above her head and the wind fluttered the bright paper wings. She handed the bough to the little girl. "When you were younger, Lugarda, all of us in the village drew the butterfly and carried him on sticks in a long procession. And then in the afternoon we danced. The young men of the village, and the maidens with bright streamers and rainbows on our headdresses. Our father carried a bow, because he was the leader, and a pine bough in the other hand. There were crimson spots on his cheeks and his hair spread down his back like a fan over his wings." Lugarda's eyes widened. "He was often the leader," Victoria continued. "You cannot remember him so, Lugarda. But I do."

The child smiled, moving her arms slowly up and down, and turning her body. She stood up, bending her knees a little. "And did you dance too, Victoria, did you dance?" Victoria looked up at her, and the little girl wondered at the color of her eyes, like the chips of turquoise around her neck. "I wore a headdress with sharp points tipped with eagle feathers and a long sash and many capes

on my back." Her fingers closed over the stones of her necklace. "The colors of these butterflies, Lugarda," she said, pointing.

Victoria held the corn cakes in her hands, slapping them into paper-thin wafers, her bracelets striking together as she pressed and shaped with her fingers. Now and then she turned to watch Lugarda as she followed her thumb down the paper, forming words softly in her mouth. It was always a wonder to Victoria how she could find a story in that book. There was something about a brother and sister, twins, and a dog. They lived in a white house with a green slanting roof, according to Lugarda, and there were flowers all around the fence. Sometimes the little girl, Joan, took her watering can and watered the flowers while her brother threw a red ball for the dog to catch. There was a picture of them doing that. To Victoria, Joan looked very fat, with round pink knees.

Victoria slapped the corn cakes harder, shaking her hair away from her forehead covered with wet drops. The Thunder Bird seldom flapped his wings beyond the Black Mesa, and Rainbow Maidens hid their faces from children who hastened to the white school. It was a long time ago that she squatted beside the flat stone grinding corn with her mother, singing, as the kernels melted away into yellow sand. A long time ago when young men stood under the window with flutes, smiling and showing their teeth in the dark. And how the girls giggled and hid their faces behind their hair! And the children thought only of the dances then. Not of reading words in a book. Why, when Victoria was Lugarda's age she had already learned to shape the clay with her hands. Sometimes there were foot races with the Koshare playing tricks and upsetting one another in the dust, or splashing in the water that day they all went out to build the bridge. Poor little half sister born too late. More daughter than sister, now that their father was dead.

Victoria stirred the ashes in the stove with a poker and dropped kindling on the top, striking a match across the charred burner. She remembered that she was about Lugarda's age the night the black demon opened the door. He stood there on the threshold holding hawk feathers, with antelope hooves and pebbles swinging from

his legs. She would never forget that fear in her chest when the great horned head turned its yellow eyes toward her. She screamed and pressed against the wall, too frightened to run away. The creature glided away then, and it was not until months later after her initiation that she learned it was her father who had frightened her so, surprised to find her there at all.

Victoria did not suppose that Lugarda ever dreamed of ogres in doorways, yet probably Lugarda's own baby memories had been terrifying enough. Their father had changed in the last few years to a demon of another sort when he came home so often the way he did spitting curses and slamming on the table with his fist. One of the best silversmiths in the village, he sat all day in the window of Maisel's Trading Post shaping silver and turquoise into rings and bracelets. But his daughters feared him when he came home reeling and shouting with the fire in his head. He had grown rich enough to buy a great bed. What a wonder it was, with two mattresses and gleaming brass headposts. Everyone in the village had come to see it. And one night he had taken a stick to it, beating it so hard that it rang with a hollow sound and one of the headposts toppled off, scratched and dented black. He had even smashed the new mirror that night.

Victoria laid her cakes in a row, pushing them close together in the pan. She was sorry Lugarda could not remember the better times.

Lugarda pressed her hands over her eyes and yawned. "I am tired of the words," she said, closing her book and wrinkling up her nose. The little girl got up from her stool and stood beside her sister, watching the cakes turn a golden brown color. Her fingers pulled at the fringed sash that reached to Victoria's small bare feet. The older woman loosened a plait of the child's hair and tickled her ear, straightening the necklace that hung crooked over the collar. Lugarda shook the hair away from her forehead, pulling away from her sister. "See how my hair falls in my eyes," she said loudly, shaking the loose braid violently so that more black hair fell across her eyes. "It would not do that way if you would buy me a hair bow like you promised." Victoria scraped her knife around the

rim of the pan, digging at the dark crusted crumbs that wanted to stick. "When did I ever promise you, Lugardita?"

"On my Name Day, months and months ago." She paused, sucking in her breath in little whistling sounds. "I asked for a long time, and you almost promised me." The older woman pressed the steaming cakes flat. The odor of sweet corn filled the room. She studied the handle of her knife that mirrored back a portion of her face, curiously distorted. She was all forehead, with eyes so big, like blue stones set in either side of her nose. Victoria put down the knife. "You think always of that girl in your book. She is not you, Lugarda. If I buy you a hair bow you will want next to cut off your hair. And then you will be asking me to put curls in it." Lugarda lowered her head and fluttered her eyelids. "Felipita has a new hair bow. It is nice to touch, like a butterfly with black spots, a hair bow that ties like . . ." Lugarda spread her fingers like wings at the side of her head, but her sister would not look as she bent over the stove, humming to herself as though she had not heard at all.

Lugarda walked over to the table and picked up a wooden doll. She blew at the yellow feathers that stood up above the black face and curved scarlet horns. The figure wore a tiny necklace not unlike Lugarda's own. Looking into the solemn face, she stuck out her tongue, crinkled up her eyes and blew out her cheeks as far as she could. Then she sat down with her legs tucked under to wait for dinner, her arm tightening around the doll as she watched Victoria turn the spitting brown cakes with her knife.

Victoria put down her hoe and wiped her hands on her apron. If she were going, it was time she started before the sun was high. She had put it off long enough, dreading the walk to Bernalillo, dreading Bernalillo with the stop and go signs, the faces of white people. It had been a long time since she left San Felipe. She looked at her fingers, counting them. Yet since their father was not here to see to it, Victoria was the only one to fetch the clay, and the best clay was in the Jemés hills a mile or so beyond the town. Last night, lying in the brass bed beside the sleeping child, Victoria had run

her fingers over the cool metal headpost above her head, tracing the old familiar patterns, smiling, as she rehearsed the lesson. They would work in black and white, saving the more difficult designs for a later time. She had let the months slip by. She had been too easy on Lugarda, who must make time for lessons not taught in the schoolhouse.

Rubbing at the back of her neck, stiff from the weeding, Victoria turned to look at her garden. "It will not be long before my squashes are fat and beans ready for picking," she said aloud. She reached for her hoe and waved it out toward the neat rows of plants. Then, stepping around a horned toad, she made her way across narrow black ditches and puddles of water, and up over a sand hill before she reached her own clean-swept front yard. The house was dim and cool when she entered, and she could not see when she fumbled for the shawl that hung beside the blankets and basket of dried corn. Dipping a gourd into the earthen pot on the floor, she took a long drink. It was going to be a hot day.

She chose a back road that wound over the hills toward the main highway. It was a shorter distance, though the ancient track was rutted from the passing of wagon wheels. Her boots were covered with sand when she reached the top of the hill, and she stamped her feet, stopping for a minute beneath a cottonwood. Fields of half-grown corn stretched below her and small figures moved about among the furrows. She knew the Cacique was down there, toothless and half blind, planting the prayer feathers and blowing grains of corn from his hand, and she knew too that the young men mocked him and called him foolish old man in their thoughts. Beyond the fields she could see a little girl come up the river bank, the wind blowing her long hair over her face as she walked, the water slopping out of the pail and over her bare feet. Fat Reyes opened his blue door and yawned before striding out to snap his slingshot into the air and kick at a clod of dirt. His yellow dog followed him around the corner of the house, its pink tongue lolling out and its shaggy tail waving, as it sniffed the ground. Smoke rose from the chimneys of earth houses, and fat Reyes balanced himself on the wall, holding a stick of wood straight out in each hand as he shouted

at his dog. He came to a broken fallen-away place and had to leap down, waving his stick arms. There was not much need for a wall now, and only crumbling parts of it remained.

She watched Abalonia hang a new blanket out on the line. What a fine one it was, with terraced bands of black and stripes of ochre at the ends. Juan could give Abalonia all the blankets she wanted because he worked as a plasterer in the city, and Victoria envied her her fine turquoise. She owned more jewelry than any other woman in the village, and wore each piece every day, round arms covered from elbow to wrist with silver. Strings of turquoise and coral shook against full breasts when she laughed.

The houses looked like playthings grouped about the plaza with only the towers of the church reaching high, and the sun shooting sparks off the two bells. The rocky places of the sandias were beginning to turn violet and rose, the forests still black in the crevices. Soon it would all be pink like melon and the river far below a wriggling green serpent. The schoolhouse, in its new coat of paint and green lawn with a wire fence, looked to Victoria as if it had suddenly dropped all of a piece from the sky. And that was where Lugarda was, in that place with the yellow-haired teacher who smiled at the mothers when she walked through the village, wetting her lips and pulling at the scarf around her neck.

A wagon rattled down the hill toward her, the driver half sitting, half standing as he clucked at his horse and slapped the reins upon his back. Victoria recognized Joseph Chavarilla. Large chunks of turquoise hung from his ears on a thread and the ragged shirrtail billowed out around his hips when he stood up to pull his horse to a stop. He smiled, calling out her name. "Victoria, Victoria, where are you going?"

"I go to get the clay beyond Bernalillo," she answered, shaking her large burlap sack at him.

"I would take you, but my grandfather waits for me in the field." Joseph sighed a little, wiping his nose with the back of his hand. Victoria nodded her head, knowing well that old Chavarilla seldom allowed Joseph in town. Indeed, he never attended school and Lugarda laughed at him because he spoke hardly any English at

all and could not read even in the First Reader. Old Chavarilla is wrong, Victoria thought, and yet she did not like Lugarda in the town either.

"The clay will be heavy on your back when you return," Joseph said, pointing at the sack.

"I am a strong old woman."

The boy smiled, showing his white teeth. He clucked to his horse and touched the beast with a flourish of his stick. Then, drawing himself up to full height, he bent deeply from the waist, sweeping an imaginary hat from his head in a full bow. "Adios," he called back through the dust as he rattled away. Victoria wondered if it were true that Joseph sometimes did steal away to the movie house with the other boys.

Victoria sang aloud as she walked. She sang the song of the Corn Maidens who carried the seed trays in both hands to the children of the Long Ago People. A white-tailed rabbit skipped by, its head turned to look and its nose quivering, before it hurried away to hide behind the juniper that grew in dark clumps hugging the hills. Far above her she saw the flash of a white wing, and she stopped, squinting her eyes and shading them with her hand. If it were an eagle, it was a happy sign. She had not seen one for a long while. Sometimes when she worked in her garden she thought she heard the familiar cry of a caged bird. But they no longer kept them in the village for the dance. Their father had often performed before the sharp-beaked creatures, swooping and bending, standing tall, then crouching to beat his wings against the ground. How many afternoons she had stood, pressing her back against the cool adobe and shading her eyes with her hand, to watch the shadow of bird wings lengthen across the plaza floor.

The road appeared before her, long and straight with a white line in the middle. She stopped at the end of the path to examine a young yucca that sprouted part of a flower. A little wind blew cool against her face, rattling the stiff leaves of the aspen beside her. She stepped out on the road, knowing she could not lose her way, for there was not a twist, nor bend. The gray asphalt stretched for miles without a hollow or bump. And she had been told by

Abalonia that signs lit up magically when cars passed over at night.

Victoria sang a little more as she walked, and then, tiring of that, counted the cars that passed on the highway. After a while she divided them into colors and counted those. Blue cars passed her, yellow cars. And when a shiny black auto descended suddenly roaring out of nowhere, with the top off and people inside laughing, she jumped away in time. A bottle smashed into green pieces beside her, burying its sharp edges in the sand. "They did not even see me," she said, looking down at the shining bits of glass.

She knew before she came to it that something dead or dying lay on the way before her because of the angular dark shape that flapped overhead. Victoria was certain those red, fearful eyes had spied something. She was surprised when she reached it that any creature would bother this little bundle of yellow feathers. The wings fluttered when she picked it up, one claw crooked and hanging down, the tiny head mussed with blood. A bright eye blinked at her and closed when she twisted the neck with a quick movement of her hand. Victoria dug a hole in the sandy part beside the road, reaching down to scoop out a little hollow with her fingernails. She placed the bird in a hole, pulling out three tail feathers before covering it up. The feathers were warm. She would give them to the Cacique for his prayer sticks.

Victoria walked on, feeling the sun warm through her shawl. Jagged tops of mountains were clearly outlined now and the hills stretched below them like mounds of freshly risen dough. A car passed her, honking its horn. "What you honking at me for?" she said, straightening her back. "I'm right over here on my side." Two small faces stared back at her, pressed against the window. The car stopped and backed up, pulling off the road. A young man stepped out, and Victoria watched wonderingly the large, white, bouncing shoes approach her. He was taller than the average man, with hair cropped short, a little of the sunburned scalp showing through. His face, peeling around the nose, was full, and tiny beads of perspiration trembled on a pouting upper lip when he spoke. Now he was jingling coins in his pocket and slapping the camera

hanging from his shoulder. Victoria nodded, watching him. He shouted at the children, and a boy and girl not much older than Lugarda climbed out, standing away from her, eyes big and staring. Another person stayed in the front seat. Victoria could see slender, tanned fingers drumming the window sill.

Music blew out to them from the car. Victoria waited uncertainly until the man pointed out where he wanted her to stand. He pulled the camera out of its cover, squinting into it. Victoria took off her shawl and straightened her necklace, patting the bangs smooth on her forehead. She pulled at the wrinkles in her skirt, adjusting the waistband. The man moved nearer, clearing his throat and tugging at his collar. The children giggled when he kicked the toe of his white shoe into the sand. Victoria folded her arms to show she was ready. The camera clicked. Now he was motioning her over to the fence post and shouted at the children, waving his arm at them, to stand one on either side of her. But the little girl shrank back against the car, shaking her brown curls, and the woman called something from the front seat. So the man took the picture with Victoria standing alone by the post, with the hills behind her. Then he moved her over to the right, squinting to look at a part of the mountain, and shook his finger at her so that she would turn her head toward the mesa. The last picture was taken a little way off the road with Victoria sitting under a cottonwood, her skirts spread out in circles of color around her on the ground.

The man turned the knob of the camera and pushed it back into its leather box. Shooing the little boy ahead of him, he started for the car. Victoria hurried after him, holding out her hand. "Silver?" she said. The man dug into his pocket and dropped a coin into her outstretched hand. Turning away, heavy lips pressed together in a thin, pink line, he found his keys and slammed the car door. The engine roared. The car swerved back on the highway, skidding up bits of gravel. Victoria heard the laughter of a woman, and stared back at the children watching her with their faces pressed against the glass. When the car with the music was gone up the dusty road, she turned the coin over, rubbing it shiny on her skirt. She had never expected a half dollar. "I am very rich today." She patted

the silver, feeling its edge through the beaded pouch at her waist.

She was approaching the signboards and knew it was not much farther to go now. A woman poured frothy milk from a pitcher, the gleaming refrigerator door magically opened and closed, and a pretty girl offered a cool drink as she walked by, smiling a wide perfect smile. Victoria smiled back, stopping to wipe her forehead with the sleeve of her dress. It was hot. Her blouse felt pasted against her back.

At the entrance to the city she stopped, looking about her. Such a wide street, with gas pumps on two corners, cars parked slanting into the sidewalk, and lights popping red, yellow, and green. A green light beckoned, and she crossed the street walking fast. A girl with white flowers on her hat brushed Victoria's arm. The rosy mouth murmured apology, large eyes scrutinizing Victoria's suede boots, her long wilted skirt, and each turquoise bracelet on her wrist. Victoria pulled her shawl more closely around her and, turning away, stopped before a polished glass window.

Copper pans hung on their faces against the wall and porcelain bowls, with long-handled spoons to stir, marched along the bottom shelf. Victoria moved closer to admire the starched tablecloth with little embroidered scallops and the fringed napkins. Paper roses, carefully arranged, graced the center of the table. Shading her eyes, she tried to peer beyond the window into the store, but a curtain hid anything further to see. Ah, there was another window further down. A massive bed squeezed its blue ruffles between a black chest with gleaming brass knobs and a high-backed figured armchair. Lovely pale ladies, framed in smoky mirrors, hung a little crookedly on the wall. And a fuzzy dog stared glassily back at Victoria from his nest of satin pillows.

The door opened too easily when she pushed her arm against it. Grateful feet sank deep into the soft gray carpet. The ceiling, arching above her head, was the highest she had ever seen, higher than the church of San Felipe. And in the center hung shining candles, tier upon tier, dripping slender glass raindrops.

“May I assist you?” A tiny brown woman had come up so softly behind Victoria that she jumped. Giggling unexpectedly, she

slapped her hand over her mouth. The woman wore a brown dress and brown curls dangled loosely over her forehead, above eyebrows that moved alarmingly up and down between words when she talked. "What you like see? Little girl's dresses maybe?" Her voice trilled up at the end and the eyebrows looked questioning. The dresses hung over shining pink hangers, pushed together in blurs of ruffled color. Victoria stared down at the toes of her boots, confused, wondering how she could possibly tell this little wren woman that she had come only to look about. She did not have money enough to buy. Reaching in her money pouch, she brought out the piece of silver. It gleamed brightly in her hand when she held it up, pointing to show this was all she had. Smiling and bowing, she slowly backed toward the doorway still clutching the silver in her outstretched hand. But the little brown woman was strangely nodding as though she understood what Victoria wanted to buy for she grasped her arm, with surprising strength, and leading her over the soft carpet, pointed to a long, curving display case against the wall. The small head bobbed up and down, eyebrows wiggling about the forehead like baby water snakes when she patted Victoria's shoulder. "You want?" she said, pointing with a freckled index finger at Victoria, "You want pretty surprise for little girl?"

And then smiling with a little flourish of triumph widening her brilliant lips, as though she had surely known all along, she held up before Victoria's startled eye a spotted butterfly stuck with a tiny gold hook.

When Victoria opened the door into the blinding sunshine, she knew it was foolish to walk any farther that day, for the hot air felt doubly unbearable after the dim coolness inside. Her legs—two sticks of wood—did not want to obey her. Her whole body ached and she felt desperately thirsty. Dropping down on a bench at the corner, she looked longingly across the street, wondering if she dared enter one of those places and ask for a drink of water.

A giant pasty face, with little blue pins of eyes, leaned over her, peering down from its wood scaffold in the sky. As Victoria stared back, the bulging cheeks puffed out a ring of smoke. The smoke

hovered in the air, a perfect circle and melted away. But now another gust of smoke blew from the fleshy mouth to take its place. A little boy standing a few feet from Victoria, with Mercurochrome on his knee, reached high to grab the circle above his head. A white headed man next to him pounded his cane on the sidewalk. "There she goes again," he pointed flourishing his stick, as another smoke ring, larger this time, issued from the giant pink mouth. The ring broke apart in a little gust of wind that carried it away. Already a new circle spewed from the puffy lips. "Isn't it amazing how they do that?" asked a plump woman, swinging her market basket at her hip, turning to the old man, who nodded, digging his cane vigorously into the cement. "Another one's coming out sure enough."

Looking up at the giant face, Victoria wondered if after everyone was in bed asleep and there was no one to see, the rings still kept coming out with the same regularity, or if something happened to it inside to make it stop. The face even looked a little like the man with the camera, and for a minute it seemed possible that he had been blown up to this enormous size. The puffy lips were the same and the little blue pins of eyes like his. The leering paper face towered over them all. Victoria set her teeth into her chapped bottom lip, tasting salt and grimacing at this foolish giant receiving homage like a clown. She remembered the way the man with the camera had twisted away from her when she had accidentally brushed his shoulder, asking for silver, and how his lips pursed in a straight, thin line of contempt. As though by a single touch she might. . . . And yet he was not one to suffer contamination. Had not her father suffered most of all?

When Victoria stood up from the bench, she nearly called out because the little one across the street looked so like Felipita's sister. Shaking her silky hair from her eyes, the child pulled at a coral necklace round her neck, dropped it into her white open mouth, and stared wide-eyed at the wobbling pasteboard face above her head. Rubbing one dusty foot against her ankle, she cupped her fingers around her eyes like shades, smiling suddenly at the ringlet of smoke that blew out to her. The fringed edges of her long sash swept the dust as she reached toward the dissolving circle, standing tiptoe, bent elbows

showing through the velvet jacket, jangling gold bands melting on her arms in the hard sunshine.

Victoria took a step toward the child, but stopped all of a sudden, and wildly reached out for something to hang on to, feeling the sidewalk running away under her feet. Little spots of light danced before her closed eyes. And then as she stood there, fumbling for her shawl, lids pressed together, and the sun burning down on her uncovered head, she felt for the first time a new sense of loss, as though a stranger standing beside her had quietly and without telling taken something from her. She put her hand to her belt. The package was there. She had not lost that. The little brown woman had wrapped the spotted butterfly carefully in tissue paper for her to carry without mussing. But pressing with her thumbnail through the fragile tissue paper, she saw the tiny metal hook and felt like a betrayer.

The sandias were turning blue when she reached her own road, the turkeys fussing at one another, making a racket, finding perches in the scrub trees. Victoria took a good deep breath, smelling peaches and her little withered apricots. She could see Joseph Charavilla's sheep down by the hollow, butting and pushing one another with wooly noses, could hear the persuasive bleat of a ewe bedding down her young. Perfelia was trimming up her lamp, the soft glow suddenly lighting up all the windows and the fiery peppers swaying on black skeleton poles. She could even see Perfelia's dipper from where she stood, whirling like a silver top inside the brimming water bucket.

Victoria quickened her steps, half running. Lugarda was probably starved, and maybe even a little frightened, wondering what in the world had become of her. It was when she stumbled over a half-dead blackberry bush and stopped to examine her poor knee, that she heard for the first time the faltering drum of the old Cacique. And that irregular beat, sounding so faint and far away, reassured her that she was nearly home.

FATHER RAVEN

by A. E. Coppard

[On learning that *The Pacific Spectator* planned to publish a story by A.E. Coppard, Mr. Frank O'Connor wrote:

Literary fashions have always fascinated me. In my youth A. E. Coppard was recognised not only as a storyteller in the great tradition but as the greatest of English storytellers. The "Times Literary Supplement" dealt with his work with a gravity now reserved for Joyce and Eliot. Yet in more than fifteen years I have not seen one serious critical essay dealing with it.

At the same time his contemporaries have never faltered in their admiration for it. People like J. B. Priestley and L. A. G. Strong, while knowing that his work, always (as the Times Literary Supplement complained) "uneven," is frequently downright erratic, also remember a score of stories like "Dusky Ruth," "The Higgler," or "The Watercress Girl," which are as much part of their experience of literature as "The Lady with the Dog" or "The Dead." They know that no one since Trollope has so well described the everyday life of England; its villages, manor-houses, churches, and pubs.

This means, of course, one of those terrific comebacks that will make a great deal of money for someone. If the Stock Exchange sold shares in a man's work, I should be quite content to put my last dollar on Coppard's, and look forward without perturbation to a secure old age.]

THE old priest, Father Raven, was a dear and a darling, a little prancing man somewhat big in the belly though you wouldn't call it a paunch, it was a plumpness that betokened a good appetite and caused the crucifix and holy medallion on his watch-chain to tinkle as he trotted along with the smiles coming out of his nice old face. And he had a way with him that betokened a kind heart towards the unsaintly as well as the dutiful and any other

whatever. He loved little children and nice women and good men and as shepherd of his little flock he led them right and he led them true. His mind was at rest with God, and when he slept he was visited by proper and beautiful dreams—angels and so on.

Did you hear what happened to him then on the Day of Judgment?

He and his flock had gone as they thought, poor dears, on their annual outing to the seaside, the entire concourse of the parish, all the men, the women, the children, and a dog or two, the whole forty of them; not a creature stayed at home in that scrimp of a place barring the pigs and a pack of hens, so when the postman tramped into it at one o'clock although it was warm and sunny with the trees just waving and the dust of the lane just rising, every window in the parish was fastened, every wicket shut, every door locked. It was silent and deserted, it was blank and hollow, like a city of the dead—the postman thought—and he wasn't at all easy in his mind until he was out of the place again.

And there they were all at the seaside, gone in three waggonettes hired for the day from Broadribb's Hotel; the drivers wore tall hats with coloured ribbons dangling, and the two Hatfall men, Jake and Johnny, with their little sister Nym, played music. Johnny had a glib finger for the melodeon and his brother Jake jingled and thumbed a tambourine while little Nym, a lovely fair pipit of seven years, rippled away with them on the triangle. So when they were disporting themselves along the shore in good enjoyment Father Raven walked a little way off and stretched himself on the beach stones to have a quiet look at the small waves tumbling in and sliding back again.

“All the same water,” thinks he, leaning on his elbow, “but never the same wave.”

And then on a sudden, nobody knows the how and why or the least little fore and aft of it, it was very queer, but all in a twink Father Raven found himself marching like a drum major at the head of his flock, the whole forty of them marching behind him, on the road to Paradise. The Last Call had come and that is the place they were bound for, Paradise. The way was long but all was sweet

and mild with the trees just waving above them, the dust of the road just rising under them, and bells from some golden towers set on a hill ahead of them trailing a distant clamour. White roads stretched unendingly in all directions on each side of them, crowded with people travelling afoot to Paradise. Plain it was to see, its towers so glittered, yet although they kept travelling onwards it still seemed far away.

“Keep your courage up now,” Father Raven called out. “We shall soon be there.”

Most of them were light-hearted and hopeful already, though one or two were uneasy. Father Raven told them to quit flinching and flushing.

“There’s nothing to fear as yet,” he said. “Fair play is a jewel, I can promise you that. You’ve a clean slate with me any way. I expect we shall have to wait our turn, there’s such a deuce of a crowd everywhere.”

There was! A diggins of a crowd! The noise of all the footsteps going the selfsame way was like the flutter of a forest when the rain sobs on it. On they go, on and on, and not a one felt any trifle of weariness, not even little Nym, the youngest and least and last of all her family. Brothers and sisters had grown up, she was unlike the rest, and all said she was a pure and fragrant child. As far as that goes it might be true, though the Most High knows that only archangels and the like of that could be really so; but little Nym was as near it as makes no odds—here below at any rate. Some of the parish began to feel some of things in their past lives looming up on them, and Aby Purvis murmured that in all his seven and seventy years he had never had a thing he had ever wanted and didn’t look like getting it now, by crumps he did not! Dearo, dearo, dear, when your grandson’s going bald things are getting on with you.

“What in hell d’ye expect,” Cattermutt asked with a sneer.

The Widow Usher cried out at that: “Shoosh, Mr. Cattermutt!” She had never had any fancy for the great gawk, a single man with a heart as sour as the salt sea and cold as rain, and she a widow three times over.

“What’s the matter with you, ma’am?” he says in his ugly way, not liking her or any of her sort at all for her last man had hung himself on a plumtree and that’s a cold warning to any bachelor.

“Time is time,” Mrs. Usher said, “and place is place, and there’s a fitness in all things.”

“I can say my say,” he retorted, “and do my do whether or no. Charity’s good teaching but my foot u’ll always itch to kick anybody that gives me an offence. You may talk about your coals of fire but I clench fist and feel terrific, and I don’t blush for it either.”

“O, but you should, Mr. Cattermutt, shouldn’t you? To blush at sin is no disgrace.”

“Sin!” he exclaimed.

“Ah, don’t begin quarrelling now,” Mrs. Usher pleaded in soft humility; “there’s a good man, please don’t.”

They tramped on, the lot of them, jabbering as though the day was the like of any other day and they were going to the pictures. Whatever the outcome, good or bad, they’d no help for it now but to go on to the end behind Father Raven, and he showed no alarm and never stopped a step but strode out like a great person who was used to getting his own way or else having a large talk about it.

“A diggins of a crowd,” he sighed, throwing an eye about him. Away through the trees on the right hand he could see millions, and on the left, along roads crossing green great fields, there were millions more, millions, their footsteps rumbling on and on, voices chattering ever and ever. It delighted Father Raven to see the fine green pastures as close as all that to Paradise. He had a fondness for big fields, to see them any time was good; to walk in them in the spring time when the dandelions were the only flowers in the grass filled him with mute sweet pleasure. The present turn of events had not incommoded him, and if he was not as jubilant as you might think he might have been at least he was no ways alarmed, and not doubtful of the end, because all this was all very natural. A wondrous marvellous occasion, of course, but always to be expected at some time or other, as certain as the dawn of day; it was the ultimate dream of all, the realisation of mortal hopes, the deliverance from

evil—and what about a little smoke now as we jog along. Into his pockets he dipped but they were empty, not a pipe or a scoop of tobacco in any of his garments. O dear yes! he supposed he would have to give up smoking now, he would have to give it up! And a good thing too, it was bad for the lungs; he spent quite a time every morning hawking the phlegm off his chest. As he lifted his hat and smoothed his grey locks it came upon him that the shining towers were no nearer yet. They had marched that easy highway for hours, the miles were behind them, but the goal, like a mirage, was as far off as ever. Already the sun was drooping down, its low-shot beams had turned the bosoms of trees into sponges of heaving lustre; the hazels twinkled, the poplars inclined, the tall ash was most swayful.

“One gets no nearer by only lifting the sole of the foot,” said Father Raven, so he bowed his head and thought good thoughts for his people as he led them along. Not a creature did they meet yet who had turned back, save a man sitting on a rock. He seemed to be in sorrow, for he leaned with his head resting between his hands. As they approached him little Nym tinkled on her triangle and called out gaily: “Hallo, mister!”

He looked up and stared in silent sadness.

“Hallo!” she rallied him again as they passed.

The man said nothing and turned once more to his brooding.

“D’ye think we are all right?” Mr. Gillingwater asked of the woman alongside him. Winny Cope it was, the mother of two twins though her nuptial finger had not felt the weight of a marriage ring yet. Father Raven had cracked on at her when she made such a fool of herself but she was never daunted. She was a lissom woman and had a lissom nature. “I’m my sons’ own mother, or may the seven blessings fail me,” was what she answered him, and on their very first birthday she dressed up as a Russian and bought a ham and there were flowers and flags “Up the Doublets” all over the parish.

“D’ye think we are all right?” Mr. Gillingwater says to this Winny Cope, for he was always a nervous old spook, harmless as a lamb, not one of your God-for-nothing rob-the-poorbox sort of

jokers but full of fears of this and that or the end of the world and himself altogether.

“D’ye think we are all right?”

“You’ll see,” was her answer. “Why shouldn’t we be?”

“I dunno. You can’t tell your luck from the look of anything here, Winny Cope.”

“O, you’s such a ’spicious man.”

“Well it’s not of my own accord I’m going this stretch, and I’d forfeit all I have in the world to know what’s about.”

“Don’t worry your dear heart. Father Raven puts in all the good prayers for us. Look at him now!” she said.

By and by Gillingwater bent to her again: “How much money you got in the bank, Winny Cope?”

“Huh! I got nothing,” she laughed. “But the bank’s got plenty!”

So then he held out something under cover of his hand. “Take it,” he said.

She took it and gave it a look: a shining sovereign lay in her palm, neat and warm and heavy.

“What’ll I do with it?” she asked.

“Trousie and boots for the boys,” said Mr. Gillingwater.

Winny’s thoughts gave a gobble at that. Well to goodness, didn’t he know yet, the old jackass! Fancy offering backsheesh to God—a cat would know better. “Are ye daft!” she cried, and tossed the coin away into the trees. All the same she added: “God bless ye, daddy.”

And now it wasn’t long till they got nearer and much nearer to the hill of Paradise. They could see it close and clear. There was a moat around it, all round, of clear water; you could only get over it by crossing a narrow bridge that looked to be made of blue glass—though it might have been sapphire, it glowed very richly in the down-going light. They’d to take their turn now, as Father Raven said, all in order and no crushing. Slowly they moved on. The sun went down until there was no more than twilight around them, but the cross on the topmost tower gleamed with a light that could never be dimmed.

“Halt!” a great voice sounded from the bridge. “Be still!” it said.

And when the multitude was hushed word went round that as time was getting on and the light was gone all the remaining judgments would be made in the mass instead of individually, therefore all the parish priests were requested to go forward alone to answer for their people.

“Come!” said the great voice again.

And there was Father Raven with his cassock kilted up to his knees.

“Why, he wears breeches and stockings!” little Nym cried out.

Father Raven took time by the fetlock, as they say; he flew off towards the bridge and there’s no deer could have beat him the way he went on that lick with his two legs twinkling like the spokes of a wheel. And there was no more distress on him when he reached the bridge than would have lifted one bristle of a bee.

A great handsome being was waiting there.

“How many?” he asked Father Raven.

“Forty in all,” Father Raven said. “Seven men, twelve women, twenty-one children.”

“Sinless?”

“Quite,” said he. “Safe and sound, the best in the world.”

“All of them?”

“Yes,” Father Raven said.

“You have no doubts?”

“None whatever, not a scruple.”

“You vouch for them all?”

“For certain sure I do!” he answered sharply.

The handsome being looked solemnly at Father Raven, his red lips were set in a truss of black beard: “You pledge your immortal soul upon it?”

Now it gave the good priest a bit of a shaking to be asked to pledge his own one soul for the lot of theirs, and no wonder with all the dubious roguery of the Hatfalls and the Boddrills and Catter-mutt behind him, not to mention the naughtiness of Winny Cope and one or two others. Yet what did it all amount to any way? They were good enough for him, kind loving creatures when you got to know them, the salt of the earth really, and if anything in regards

of them turned out to be not quite up to snuff he would explain it and smooth it out if They wanted it that way. So he chanced his soul on their spotlessness. "Yes, I will," he declared stoutly, "for certain sure I will."

"They may pass," said the blackbearded man.

Father Raven, all joyful, waved to his people and they rushed up crowding to get on the bridge.

"Get on, on with you, lose no time! Are you there, Winny? And you, Johnny Hatfall? That's right, on you go, Aby. Quickly now, quickly!"

With many pokes and pats Father Raven urged them all safely on to the bridge, but just as he essayed to follow them a barrier was interposed and stopped him only. He protested and tried to break through, but the black-bearded one snapped his finger and thumb with a thick click and waved him away.

"Begone!"

In a flash of mortal anguish Father Raven realised that he was doomed.

"Sir! Sir!" he pleaded.

"Your pledge is forfeit," the slow voice replied. "Stand away!"

The priest was thrust out, there was no help for him, his fond heart had betrayed him, had stolen the truth from his tongue. He heard the tinkle of little Nym's triangle fading across the bridge, growing fainter and fainter, and when he could hear it no more he felt his soul shrivel out of him.

THE EVEN TEMPERATURE IN THE CAVE

by Mary Nash

I

WHEN the cousins came round the turn of the deck, they saw Nedda's mother sitting a long way off at the very end of that windy, slanting corridor. The Mediterranean guidebook was on her lap, and she was looking out past the rail at the steep Sicilian coast.

"Hold it a minute!" Nedda said, putting her tanned arm over Jack's shoulder. For a moment they stood and looked at Serena, knowing very well that she was waiting for them, but resisting the wind at their backs which urged them toward her. "Let's flop," sighed Nedda, and so they sat down in two empty deck chairs which were side by side in a patch of summer sunlight, closing their eyes and turning their brown faces into the wind and sun.

This morning the cousins, who were both seventeen, felt tremulous and languid, partly because they had been up the night before—much later than Serena, who had gone to bed at ten, imagined—but mostly because of the bottle of Spumanti they had wheedled from a steward who was a special friend of theirs, and consumed in their retreat on the boat deck, in the protected place behind the superstructure of the bridge. It was not that they felt ill; on the contrary, they were in a delightful, though precarious, state of hyperesthesia. Every twinge and pull of their hollow stomachs, each emphatic thud of their hearts was keen and edged, and deeply significant. They could not help being gravely pleased that they had hangovers.

Stretched out in the long chair, limp and wan, Nedda ran her tongue over her dry lips and remembered the wine, which was the first she had ever tasted. Actually she had found it like nothing so much as a sweet carbonated drink tainted with vinegar. Yet she was not disenchanted. The ambiguity of its taste, both sweet and acid,

suggested a new dimension of pleasure, which she was eager to explore. And when a crowd of children came jostling along the deck before their chairs, she raised her eyelids feeling decadent and weary, and smiled nostalgically to witness their innocent, short-lived joy.

Beyond the rail she could make out the houses of Palermo. "We *would* have a shore trip today! Honestly, if Mother tries to get us into a bus with fifty other . . ." The recollection of their recent bus ride in Lisbon, up and down hills, around acute curves, with sickening stops and starts, and exhaust continuously seeping in the open windows was suddenly horrid in her mind. "Jack, why don't you simply tell her that we want to do the place on our own—just the three of us. She'll do anything to cheer the poor orphan nephew. The whole idea of taking this cruise is to distract you, dear boy, so make it clear that it's your wish . . ."

Her cousin interrupted her with a deep sigh, resigned and inviolable. "She's *your* mother, Nedda, I'm just a poor relation along for the ride."

There it was again. That martyred separateness that defied her! She raised her stubborn chin and looked up into the eye of the sun, right through the bright gold ball, and, for a second, into its angry stone-white pupil.

"Oh, there you are, monkeys," came Serena's voice, and they saw her hurrying toward them along the deck with the guidebook tucked under her arm. "I've been hunting you all morning. Nedda was dead to the world in her bunk when I went out for breakfast, and Jack didn't answer when I knocked on his door." She sat down on the foot of Nedda's chair, and leaning across, patted Jack's cheek. "How is my old dear?" Nedda did not miss the proud and lonely smile he gave his aunt.

"Let's hurry and have an early lunch and be in the first load ashore!" Serena cried, standing up and taking each of them by an arm, tugging at them gaily.

As Serena went ahead through the double doors between the main deck and the foyer, the cousins exchanged glances at the prospect of lunch.

"Tell her we had a late breakfast if she wants to know why we aren't eating," Nedda advised Jack.

"Go on ahead and order, children," Serena called, pausing by the purser's office. "I want to cash a few travelers' checks."

So the cousins started down the dim main stairway toward the dining saloon. On the first landing an enormous mirror faced them. Nedda saw as they descended the two young lovers who always came down the reflected stairs to meet them, a pair very like themselves, but with bodies a little elongated, more mysterious, more delicate, and with blue and luminous faces crowned with pale hair, and weightless feet that only glanced off the mirrored steps. The four of them approached each other on that landing, as they always did, demure and sober, pretending not to see, then turned their backs in twos and went down out of sight.

"Now, Mother," said Nedda when she and Jack had finished a large meal and felt surprisingly restored, "I *hope* you aren't going with the mob today. Jack doesn't want me to mention it, but that ghastly bus trip in Lisbon made him sick at his stomach."

"Why, Jack! I had no *idea*!" his aunt said, looking earnestly at him, while he turned very red and frowned at his cousin. "As a matter of fact, my own thought was that we drive out to Monreale. There's a really fine twelfth-century Norman church at the summit, and we can take the afternoon to poke around."

On the dock at Palermo were donkey carts for hire, and Nedda and Jack made Serena take one, though she herself would have felt happier about an automobile. But the cousins were fascinated by these two-wheeled wagons, bright inside and out, with primitive paintings. The subjects on the outside panels of their own cart were from the Old Testament, stern and frightening. Abraham was there, holding a knife with a bright blue blade to Isaac's throat. With the other hand he pressed down the little body with its spindly legs, and all the while he craned his neck toward God, who sat in the sky unmoved. Inside the cart, on the panels behind the seats, were scenes from antique myths, gay and childlike.

"Look, Nedda!" said Jack, as the driver swatted their donkey. "Right behind you—the Rape of Persephone."

“Idiot!” his cousin replied blandly, twisting her head and arching her back to look. “It’s Europa and the bull. Can’t you see the black fellow’s horns?”

“But that’s only because the artist thought Pluto would look like Satan.”

“Children! *Look* at the oleanders!” Serena lifted the sunglasses from her eyes and peered under them to get the true color of the trees.

“Why, there’s poor old Ceres running after them with flowers in her hand,” Jack poked the picture with his finger. “You might at least *look*, Nedda.” But Nedda was now gazing where her mother pointed.

“Jack, it’s no use reasoning with her when she’s wrong,” said his aunt, patting his hand, which now held the guidebook. “She’s very spoiled, I’m afraid, and proud and vain. Now read us what it says about things to look at on the way.”

“O.K., Aunt Serena.” Looking reproachfully at his cousin, Jack opened the guidebook and turned to the section on Sicily. “Monreale . . . ‘Elevation, 1194 feet. Distance from Palermo, 4½ miles . . . as late as 1900, road unsafe for the unwary tourist . . .’”

“Hush, Jack! You’ll terrify Mother!” Nedda prodded him sharply in revenge for Europa.

“As long as we have Nedda with us, we’re perfectly safe.” Serena sighed. “The Mafia or whatever it is would be no match for her.” Nedda began to giggle, and her mother looked ruefully and fondly at her, but Jack was still frowning into the book.

“Look here!” he said. “‘The Convento dei Cappucini near the Duomo of Monreale’ . . . that’s your church, Aunt Serena . . . ‘where the mummified remains of wealthy Sicilians were placed in the lower corridors beginning in 1621 and may still be seen. This unhappy practice was halted by authorities . . .’”

“Let me look!” Nedda threw an arm about her cousin’s neck and dug her sharp chin into his shoulder so that he had to laugh. She read aloud, “‘The lugubrious sight, while not suggested for the sensitive visitor, nor for children, is not without interest for the curious.’ Oh, we’ve *got* to see it, Mother!”

But when the driver stopped the donkey before the windowless façade of the Capuchin Monastery, Serena sat placidly in her seat. "Such an afternoon! See below us . . . those lemon groves and the city. I believe I'll just sit here and wait for you and breathe this air."

"Oh, come with us, Aunt Serena!" urged Jack.

Nedda was more sharp and firm. "Don't be a poor sport, Mother. *We have to go any place you want.*"

Inside the door the sacristan took their money and showed them to the stairs. As they began to descend, a gray odor like a subway's came up to meet them. Nedda gasped as she breathed it in, startled and pleased at its poignant aptness. Why, that smell was the very signature of a tomb!

At the foot of the stairs they found themselves at the opening of a long stone corridor very badly lit by light bulbs suspended from the ceiling at distant intervals. Along the walls on either side were lines of ornate biers and open caskets. Above these, hanging upright, were two facing rows of dead Capuchin brothers, their arms crossed on their breasts inside their deep brown sleeves, heads bent forward, shrouded by hoods which covered every feature but a glimpse here and there of a nose.

Nedda looked up at the brown figures, unaware that she had slipped her hand under Jack's arm and was gripping it tightly. "What keeps them up there, for cat's sake?"

"Tied on, some way." Jack began to stroll down the corridor.

Serena, who had resolutely gone ahead of them, stopped beside a gilded casket. "Why—it's twins!" The two little figures were in a special coffin, short and extra wide like a double baby carriage, their fine lawn petticoats, once white, now the color of clay. The small faces looked hard and bright, everlasting as wooden dolls, their pink rouge turned mauve.

"Still, they don't look as bilious as those awful color pictures you take, Jack." Nedda felt better now that she began to see the funny side.

"Ah ha! A beautiful lady," said Jack, moving along. Before them, in a brocade dress with rotted lace at the sleeves, lay an imper-

ishable creature, her ringlets, unstirred by any wind, turned cunningly forward over her ears, her haughty or imperfect nose, unsoftened, still dominating her proud face. Jack shook his arm free from Nedda's and clasped his hands theatrically over his heart.

"Oh! Spare us the Tomb Scene, Jack," groaned his cousin.

"Why ah-rt thou yet so fair?" Jack intoned, rolling his r's and bending slightly toward that obstinate and decorated face. "Shall I believe that insubstantial death is amorous? And that the lean abhorred monster keeps thee here to be his paramour? For fear . . . ?"

"Oh, can that, Jack! Don't be impressed, Mother. He was the only boy taller than the girl they had for Juliet. Actually, he's quite illiterate."

Serena did not seem to hear. "I'm cold," she said suddenly, and returned to the stairway without looking to right or left.

When they no longer heard her footsteps, the cousins shrugged and smiled and, arm in arm, went down the corridor. Soon there were no more biers with permanent ladies and gentlemen, *ecru*- and *magenta*-complexioned, but only a row of hooded figures going down the walls on either side into limitless shadows. Smaller corridors opened off the main one, and looking into these Nedda distinguished brown-habited forms laid on wooden tiers, six high or more, all the way up to the ceiling, like the crowded bunks in a troop ship.

"The rank and file," Jack said. The cousins turned and started back.

"It's interesting how they've kept these jokers so well," said Jack as they passed between the rows of caskets again. "I suppose it's the even temperature."

"Oh, Jack, what do you know about it? They're probably all pickled."

"For your information, Ned, an underground place like this probably doesn't vary more than a few degrees all year. I read about a cave once—it was the cave Twain wrote about, near Hannibal. The early settlers there used it to keep meat in it."

"Ugh, quel arome!" Nedda wrinkled her nose.

"No, that's where you're wrong. They'd discovered that the temperature was always cool and always the same, summer and winter, and everything kept perfectly. So, there was this doctor in town, and when his little daughter died, he put her in the cave in this copper cylinder."

Nedda burst into a fit of laughter that resounded through the corridors.

"Well, he was a little crazy after she died," said Jack. "He thought if he could just preserve her for a while, he might hit on some way, galvanic shocks or electric current or something, to revive her."

"Now am I supposed to ask you what happened?"

"The experiment was a failure."

"If there had been some girl's body in that cave, it certainly would be mentioned in *Tom Sawyer*."

"Gads, Nedda! This was *years* before Twain. Naturally they didn't have a copper *vat* in there when they were using the place for Sunday School picnics! But for a long time they called the place after that doctor. It was some Irish or Scotch name, I think. McDougal's Cave or Donovan's or something."

"Was it Fingal's, maybe?" asked Nedda sweetly.

"Oh, *clever* girl, Nedda! *Very* clever. Watch out some day you don't take a terrible pratfall on your great wit!" They reached the top of the stairs and saw the sacristan dozing behind his metal grille, with the sun shining down on his bald head through a little slit in the wall above.

"Let's pull his hood over his face so he looks like his friends in the cellar," Nedda suggested, and was pleased to feel her cousin shake with amusement. She always knew what would put him in a good humor after she had teased him.

Just outside the door the cousins stood and blinked in the sunlight. Their little cart was under a tree; the donkey's enormous head hung down, ears limp, fringed eyes closed. In the sun on a low bench Nedda's mother was leaning forward and holding out her hand toward a pair of rose-colored pigeons who cocked their heads and looked at her askance. The cousins ran up behind her silently, and

each took an arm. "Oh, you're like *ice*," she laughed, starting and shivering. But Nedda would not let go of her mother's arm which felt so hot from the summer sun.

"Poor, poor Mother!" she crooned, pursing her lips solicitously. "You must be one of the '*sensitive* visitors.'"

"Not at all in the way *you* mean."

"Why, what upset you then, Mummykins?"

"I . . . think it was the bolster under the twins' heads, all falling into dust. And the way the monks' heads hung forward from the wall . . . so heavily. It all looked weary and . . . futile. Nothing's so unnatural and . . . unbecoming . . . as trying to preserve a really delicate thing . . . by force . . . beyond its time!"

"Oh dear! Poor Mummy is getting all emotional," said Nedda, rubbing her icy nose against her mother's flushed face. "But you don't need to lecture *us*. Nobody in our generation would be so sentimental. You're always saying how callous we are! Now let's go see your famous church."

II

When the Morgans and Jack came into the dining saloon that evening after the ship had left Palermo, they saw that the Turners were already there. They were a very old couple who shared their table at dinner. Mrs. Turner had a severe heart condition and spent most of the day in her cabin, and Mr. Turner, who was devoted to her, took breakfast and lunch there with her.

"Now, if they ask about what we saw this afternoon, I don't want one *word* about the Capuchins!" warned Serena as they walked between the tables. "I *know* you two!"

As they came close, Nedda saw that Mrs. Turner was wearing one of her typical old-lady evening dresses. This one was of greenish-gray lace on top of a brown satin slip. On her thick and crooked body, it made her look—Nedda was dying to whisper it to Jack but didn't dare with Serena close—like a dead tree trunk with raggedy lichen grown over it.

Mr. Turner, a spry old man, jumped up from the table, bowed over Serena's hand, and pushed in her chair for her.

Something about the presence of the Turners at the table always

made Jack and Nedda susceptible to choking on pieces of meat, to overturning their water glasses, and occasionally to agonizing seizures of silent mirth. Serena had had several talks with them about this in the cabin after dinner.

"How can we *help* it, Mummy?" Nedda would say, beginning to laugh at the very thought of the Turners. "The way he calls you 'daughter' and *crouches* over your hand with—with his big duff sticking out." Even Serena couldn't help smiling when Jack seized her hand, contorted himself in the silliest bow, and, making his arm tremble violently, brought her hand with terrible difficulty up to his twitching mouth.

When they finished dessert this particular evening, Mr. Turner took out his cigarette case and offered Serena an Egyptian cigarette. But as he laid the case down on the table cloth and leaned toward Serena with his lighter, Mrs. Turner picked up the box and took a cigarette herself.

"You may light mine, too, if you will, Gerald," she said. When Mr. Turner looked at his wife, his face grew as red, and his eyes as wild and watery, as if he were an enormous baby getting ready to howl.

"My Love! Please! Now, you've been doing so well. You know what the doctors told us."

"Oh, haven't I been *good*, Gerry? All day in bed, and not *once* off the ship—though I declare I shall go ashore in Naples!" Mrs. Turner held the cigarette between her fingers close to her mouth, cocked her head, and smiled sideways at her husband—a wheedling coy little smile—such a travesty of a girlish glance that Nedda had to look away. But Mr. Turner reached out tremulously and took his wife's hand, cigarette and all, between both of his own as if he were holding some precarious treasure.

"Little girl, I'm going to get your Sanos and the filter from the cabin. Serena will stay with you—bless you, daughter! I'll be back directly."

"I shall *not* smoke one of those wretched Sanos!" cried Mrs. Turner, pulling her hand out of his.

Mr. Turner was already standing up beside the table. "Then

you shall not, dear heart. But I will get your filter." And off he plunged with his head down, bumbling between the crowded tables like an old blind mole. The poor waiters had to leap aside, and people glanced around with their napkins up to their mouths.

Mrs. Turner stared after him, then turned to Serena with her face in an ugly bunch. "I get so . . . pent up in that cabin . . . just coming out for dinner, that I really feel quite . . . quite vicious. And poor Gerald is so *determined* that I endure . . . I won't say *live!* Flat on my back . . . fed through a tube—he'd feed me, himself." She dropped the cigarette that she was still holding and gave it a quavery push so that it rolled along until it hit the sugar bowl.

Serena put her large, warm hand over Mrs. Turner's, which was now twitching and pinching her mussed-up napkin, and beneath that pressure it grew still. Then there was an awful minute while both women looked down at their places, and Mrs. Turner, trying to get hold of herself, made gulping and swallowing noises. Nedda began to have the feeling that her lungs were being pumped up under terrible pressure. She looked at Jack, who was hunched as low as he could get in his chair, scratching designs on the cloth with his fork.

"M'we b'excused?" Nedda mumbled.

Her mother nodded sharply, not even looking up.

The cousins dared not meet each other's eyes as they left the dining saloon with expressions of bored composure. But when they were out of sight, they leaned against the paneled wall at the foot of the stairway, holding each other by the shoulders for support, shaking their fair heads, and moaning and gasping. "Oh, no . . . oh, no . . . oh, no . . ."

" . . . couldn't stand any more!" Nedda gasped.

"Little girl, daughter will stay with you while I get your Sanos."

"I will *too* go ashore at Naples, Gerald!"

"Naughty, naughty little girl! 'Member doctors . . . said, 'See Naples and die!'"

"Fantastic! I didn't dare look at you."

"What shall we do now?"

". . . boat deck!"

". . . cool off."

From the dining room in the depth of the ship they ran up all the flights to the main deck without pausing. There they went outside onto the windy deck, around a corner, and up a final iron stairway. On the top of the ship there were no lights at all. The wind hit them in the face and forced their laughter down their throats. They began to make their slow way toward the bow. Lifeboats jutted out at intervals and made black pools of calm where they could catch a breath before they pushed ahead. At last, standing at the forward rail of the boat deck, the wind was so strong that they could turn their backs, stretch out their arms, and lean their full weight into it as if it were a buoyant wall. "Ever think what would happen to us if they suddenly cut the engines?" shrieked Jack in her ear.

"What did you say?" Nedda screamed back, not really listening, but pressing as hard as she could against the tearing wind, her body thrown back, her arms wide. The thing to do was to offer no resistance, hold on to nothing, but to lean back into it fearlessly with all your heart.

"God! I can't feel my fingers." Jack straightened up and ran along the deck, disappearing behind the superstructure of the bridge. Nedda followed, and both of them huddled there in their favorite place, getting their breath and rubbing their hands. There was a roofed-over ventilator near them, growing out of the deck like a mushroom, and a hot roar of fragrant air came up perpetually from the galley.

Now that their eyes were used to the dark, they could make out a couple standing at the rail behind a lifeboat, and another on a bench at the stern, muffled in their coats. When a third pair came up the companionway from the main deck, Jack nudged his cousin.

Nedda grabbed Jack's arm in delight. "Hey! That's Mrs. Fitz and the radio officer again." And now the cousins sat absolutely motionless in their shelter watching the newcomers and straining to catch their voices. But the obsessive wind swept between them and carried off every sound.

"Remember the night in Algiers harbor when they were up here and it was so quiet we heard every word?"

Nedda put her head back against the bulkhead, her free hand pressed against her neck as if in anguish. "'Oh, Leonard, Leonard!'" she mimicked in a moist contralto. "'What am I thinking of! I'm crazy to believe you!'"

"Don't destroy everything between us with your insane doubts!" Jack rumbled. "'Good God, Enid! Doesn't *this* convince you?'" And abruptly he threw both arms around Nedda and kissed her hard. At once she pushed him away, and for several moments the cousins sat looking straight ahead of them. It was the first time Jack had kissed her without her knowing that he was going to, without her having planned the whole thing very carefully in advance. His sudden move quite startled her, and in his action she saw her as yet imperfect control of him. That was the trouble with Jack! When he took things into his own hands, he had no sense of taste or style. Without her management he was a perfect fool. Everything between them that was intricate and subtle was her creation and the fruit of her fancy. Worst of all, there had been in that ugly interrupted kiss a disturbing shift in sovereignty, and all the intoxicating joy of mastery which was her delight in her cousin was threatened.

While they sat in the shadows, Mrs. Fitz and the radio officer passed very close—quite unaware of them. Mrs. Fitz, her head on his shoulder, was dabbing her eyes with a handkerchief, and the officer bent down his head and smiled into her face. The sight of poor fat Mrs. Fitz, stupidly trapped, meek and subdued, and the patient, triumphant man, was so terrifying to Nedda at that moment that she glanced fearfully at her cousin. But he was looking neither at her nor at the couple but out into the dark.

She said in a bright, high voice, "Now, Jack, I've got to speak to you seriously about your behavior toward Mother." He turned to her with his mouth agape. Why, it was the same baffled look she had seen on Mr. Turner's face at the table. And all at once she knew that she was perfectly secure again.

"I just don't get the way your mind works at all, Ned."

"Why, it's painfully obvious the way you pull away, or look—superior—every time she tries to be affectionate with you. You did it this morning when she came to find us for lunch. That haughty smile of yours! Don't think it's on my account I mind. I just don't like to see you hurt her feelings."

"Godfrey, Nedda, I think your mother's the greatest! I mean, the way she came out to California this spring and got me after . . . after the . . ." He had a cowardly way of stopping short, of refusing to permit his lips to shape the words.

"After the plane crash," finished Nedda, enunciating clearly, as if she were helping somebody with a speech impediment. How long before she could bring him to speak of his parents' accident without that slack look of shock. "Now, take this afternoon, Jack. When I asked you to back me up on not going in the bus with the rest, you had to leave the whole thing to me while you looked the other way—very guilty and *holy*."

"I notice you told her a lot of garbage about my feeling sick on the bus in Lisbon."

She was too supple-minded to be caught on this. "Don't *spar* with me, Jack! This is serious. Do you, or do you not, want me to honestly tell you what I think?" The sound he made was not exactly an assent. It was more like a groan, yet she went on tranquilly. "Personally, I think it is a pure question of pride. Of course, you're so secretive about the way you lived in California I can't even picture it, but you make it very clear that being with us is a comedown."

When her arm touched her cousin's side, she felt him tremble. As for herself, she was so moved by this—this poem of an emotion which she was spinning out of bare words—that her heart pounded heavily. For if all that she said were not the truth, then it was something far more rich and touching.

"It's just . . . just exactly what Mother said this afternoon," she went on, drawing her words—not without difficulty—from the inspiration of this splendid and impassioned creativity. "It's unnatural . . . and morbid of you to . . . to preserve things which you should . . . have buried."

She had to lean very close to him to get his words, but she could feel how he shuddered. "I didn't know . . . she meant . . . me." Now, looking at his slender, bowed neck, his vulnerable profile, his hair so foolishly rumpled from the wind, and deeply stirred by her own power, she was stricken with ardent and pitying love. She put her arms about him and kissed his closed eyes.

"Jack . . . I'm sorry to hurt you. But I had to say these things to make you see. If you only wouldn't feel so *separate*. I just want you to be happy . . . to *belong* to me . . . us. If you'd only let me, I could *make* you happy." As she touched with her lips his eyelids and his unresisting and submissive mouth, she could not restrain tears of joy. She was overwhelmed and nearly humble in this moment of victory, and she burned with generosity to breathe life into him once more and to recreate him in a new and docile image.

III

In Customs at New York, when the Mediterranean cruise was over, the old Turners kept waving sorrowfully to Serena from where they waited in line, separated from the Morgans by some forty people. Of all of them there in the late August heat, old Mrs. Turner was the best off, Nedda thought, with her wheelchair. Nedda, herself, was feeling queer, almost ill from the grimy boredom. She kept looking over at the beautiful white flank of their ship, now grappled and bound with hawsers to the dirty wharf.

As the three of them were closing their suitcases on the wooden counter, Serena's two great friends, Bonita Tenley and Thelma Bolton, came nudging through the crowd, crowing with delight to see Serena. "You'd think they'd ransomed her from the dead or something," Nedda told Jack as the two women threw their arms about her mother.

Presently all five of them—six with the driver—were crammed into a cab, with odds and ends of luggage and things they'd bought, and Nedda was squeezed in the back seat between her mother and Mrs. Bolton. Jack and Aunt Bonita were in front, with Aunt Bonita twisted around so as not to lose sight of her dear Serena for a moment—unaware that she was crushing Jack against the window.

On the train to New Jersey there was no room for them all to sit together, so Nedda and Jack took single seats in the smoker.

They were going through that queer marsh between New York City and Newark, where no one lived and huge signs stood on the ugly hummocks and cliffs that stuck up from the wavy grass. A few seats ahead of her, Nedda could make out Jack's bright head through the bluish air. He was reading a paper-back science fiction he had picked up in the station.

"Look around! Look back!" she commanded silently, uneasy and sad. In the poisoned air her eyes were scalded as she fixed them sternly on him, but he never turned.

As soon as they reached Serena's comfortable brown-shingled house, while they were actually coming up the porch steps, the phone began to ring inside. And after that there was not an hour's respite from Serena's friends who wanted to welcome her home and "do something nice" for her poor nephew. As for Nedda's own friends—some five or six girls who lived in the neighborhood and had gone through Miss Mercer's school with her—within a week of Nedda's return every one of them was infatuated with Jack. They loved him, they said, because he was an orphan; and this feeling was inflamed when one of them pointed out Jack's resemblance to Severn's sketch of the dying Keats that hung on the wall of the English classroom at Miss Mercer's. Nedda, revolted by their vulgarity, their group anguish, their composite sighs, suddenly saw how irrevocably she had outgrown them, and could scarcely hide her contempt.

One afternoon early in September, Muriel Stanhope, the boldest of these girls, called Nedda on the phone. Muriel, as candid and trusting as if she were speaking to Jack's own sister, asked Nedda to sound out her cousin's feeling toward herself.

"My dear Mew," said Nedda, "to be brutally frank, I've never heard Jack mention your name. Actually, the only thing on my cousin's mind at the moment is Alan Tenley's car." And the truth of this last was so keen and bitter that she closed her eyes and leaned her head against the back of the chair long after she had put down the receiver.

From the moment they had stepped from the ship to the wharf in New York City, distractions and interruptions had cut across her delicate attunement to her cousin. But though this interference was annoying, it was Alan's car that presented the severest threat to their communication. For the past week, since Jack had bought a half interest in that ancient La Salle, he had been almost constantly next door in the Tenleys' driveway, and in the evening was closeted with Alan in his room, talking of finances, of parts, and of their crazy plan to drive the car up to college in Massachusetts. Alan Tenley was the son of Bonita, Serena's friend. The families had lived side by side since the children were born, a few years before Nedda's father died; and the relation of Nedda and Alan, who had played very closely as babies, had for several years been one of settled antipathy. Nothing else was conceivable when both of their mothers preserved snapshots of the two of them, stark naked at the age of four or five, running hand in hand through the spray of a garden hose which Mr. Tenley held.

Now, after Muriel's phone call, Nedda felt so hungry for the sight of her cousin that she stepped onto the screened porch, which was next to the Tenleys' driveway on the side of the house. Jack was on his knees beside the car, painting a fine black line along the fender. His gentle young face was alive with secret intelligence. He was no longer sorrowing about his past; she had broken him of *that*. He was thinking now about the future—once more unapproachable, unvanquished, and unendurably to be desired. She heard her own clear and icy voice. "What a sight! Thank God Mother refuses to let me ride to college with you two in *that*."

Her cousin looked around, saw her outline behind the screen and smiled. "Come out and keep us company, Grouchy!"

Alan's voice—he himself was invisible beneath the car—spoke in that unhurried, nasal way of his. "You never knew your little cousin when she was about twelve, Jack. I guess she weighed nearly five hundred pounds. Couple of the guys and I used to go up in my room after school in those days and look around the neighborhood with Dad's German field glasses. God! One afternoon we

looked right over into old Nedda's bedroom, and there she was in some old red silk thing with the neck pulled way down her fat shoulder. Just standing in front of her own mirror, smirking and turning her head, and pulling the neck down a little more."

Jack only grinned, but Nedda believed she saw upon his face a faint encroachment of pity. Mortified, she drew back into the house and threw herself upon the living room couch, face down. It was bitter to think that though she would have embraced the most demeaning and humiliating episodes from Jack's childhood in California, she knew nothing at all about it! Instead it was he, in this house, among these people who used to know her, who kept stumbling over the forgotten remains of the old, fat, braided, lonesome Nedda—from whom she had miraculously emerged only a few years ago. But the magnificent new Nedda, air-borne and free, whose limits and power she had only begun to test properly when the cruise ended, was unable to function in this atmosphere which was tainted by her degrading childhood. She groaned as she thought of that summer cruise which already seemed an idyll, and even the images of the grotesque Turners came into her mind as radiant comic figures glorified by the white sunlight and the fragrance of salt wind.

That evening at supper she could not prevent herself from provoking a savage quarrel with Jack. And she continued to do this during days that followed, even though she saw his eyes narrow and his new and reluctant look of dislike grow less guarded. What was going to happen? What would be left of her summer's work when Alan drove him away to college in his preposterous car? Even now, while she still had her cousin under the same roof, he was eluding her; and the more fiercely she jumped out at him from the shadows and tried to throw him down and bind him for good, the more he slipped away.

One night after she had gone to her room and was lying on her bed listening to the rise and fall of Alan's and Jack's voices in his room beyond the wall, she had a clear and frightening picture of what a futile figure she had become. She was just like that old cat

she used to have, who forgot his dainty disdain one day and pounced on a fat goldfish in Serena's garden pond. She remembered how he crawled out all draggled and shrunken, too ludicrously scrawny even to be pitiful.

On the last day before he was to go away with Alan, Jack came into the front hall from outside and called upstairs to Nedda who was packing her trunk for college. "Hey, Nedda! Put on your shorts and your dirty tennis shoes, and I'll take you out to the club and beat you." Nedda was sure her mother had asked him to do it, for she had heard Serena's voice in the Tenleys' driveway talking softly to the boys a few minutes before, and now that her faith in her own invincible power was shaken, she had begun to doubt the incorruptible innocence and blindness of her mother. Only a few weeks ago, suspecting such a thing, Nedda would have called down a caustic refusal to Jack, but today she ran to join him where he was waiting in Serena's car, hoping only that she could conceal her gratitude. Although it was the middle of September, this was a deceitful afternoon with soft and tender air that made her think of May. Only the leaves were too big and heavy for spring, and the grass dun-colored from the long days of sun.

After their game, which Jack won handily, they began to walk back slowly along the gravel path to the car. When they had gone a little way, Jack tucked his new racket under one arm and threw the other around Nedda, drawing her head against his shoulder, bending to look into her face. In their shadow which the low sun stretched on the path before them she seemed to recognize the image and the attitude of another couple she had known but could not place. Yet there was something familiar and sinister in Jack's casual, sure hold, and raising her eyes to his face with a sort of premonition, she looked into the radio officer's condescending smile and knew that on her own face was that pitiful and grateful look of love which she had detested in Mrs. Fitz. Suddenly comprehending her defeat, she felt her heart pause, then pump again, slow and grave.

"Dear old Nedda, don't look so glum!" Jack said, pressing her with his arm. "Tenley and I will be up in the buggy to see you in a couple of weeks. Get another girl and the four of us will go into

Boston for a big night. Mew Stanhope is going to be up there with you, isn't she?"

She pulled away and ran ahead of him down the gravel path.

"Now what's eating you?" he called.

Over her shoulder she saw him there in the middle of the walk, scowling after her, feet set stubbornly apart. "First one to the car gets to drive," she called back wickedly, and ran faster.

"Hey, listen, Ned!" (Oh, she could still make him move when wanted to, she thought, hearing his quick footsteps in the gravel behind.) "Nedda—*NEDDA!*"

The parking lot was just ahead of them, across a private macadam drive that led from the highway to the clubhouse. As Nedda approached this curb she saw a bright yellow car turn off the main road and start quickly along the drive. Running across the narrow road in front of it, she knew she had beaten Jack, who was very close behind her, because he would have to let the car go past.

She had her hand on the front door handle of Serena's car when the searing noise of brakes came from behind her, and for just a second she held that bar of metal tightly. But when she looked around, there was nothing unsightly in the well-tended landscape. The great pallid leaves still clung securely to their branches, and in broad daylight an enormous gray moon stood lopsided in the sky. In the yellow car a stranger was leaning forward, hands gripping the steering wheel, and on the road just ahead lay Jack's new tennis racket. She ran and picked it up at once, relieved that it was not damaged.

And then she saw her cousin lying between two whitewashed stones that marked the border of the drive. She ran to him, her sneakers in noiseless harmony with the perfect silence, and held out the unbroken racket.

"Here it is, Jack." She took no notice of the mortal signs which were clearly upon him, but one last time directed her imperious will, which had never failed to stir her cousin, upon his lingering scowl of perplexity and surprise. "Take it, Jack . . . take it!" But even while she exhorted him that he was not dead, she saw hardening upon his face, in spite of her, a look of implacable indifference.

Suddenly too tired to stand, she sat down on the painted curb-stone nearest him, with his perfectly good racket laid across her knees.

“But I did not do it, Jack,” she whispered. She did not hear the footsteps and the frightened voices that were coming near on every side, for she was studying the face of what had been her beautiful boy; as if, now that its slippery changes were congealed at last, no one could prevent her from taking all the time in the world to search it and learn it and get it by heart.

He that will have his son have a respect for him and his orders must himself have a great reverence for his son.

—JOHN LOCKE

NO MORE FRIDAYS

by George Bluestone

WHEN we were little, we used to torment my grandmother. Why she put up with us, beyond a grandma's normal pampering, we could never really understand. At least not then. We only knew she would be there to take our blows of joy or badness, and that, for us, was more than enough. It took years for us to find out where she got the strength to put up with us. In those days, we knew only the tokens: white-flax hair bound severely in a bun, red hands sanded thin by the years, false teeth kept in a water glass at night. On any Friday morning she could be seen visiting the stores of Williamsburg, a leather shopping bag dangling from her wrist, to buy her Sabbath goods. She would be dressed in high-laced shoes, dark shiny blouse, and a long, brown wool skirt which she had made herself, and which she proudly wore against all seasons. I think we sensed, rather than knew, the rugged fierceness which had convinced us that she would last forever.

Who or what she was before we came along we could not guess. She never talked about her past. And since the universe revolved around *us*, we would never have thought to ask. Her history, like a curtain, tightly drawn, would open only with the tug of years.

She showed her fierceness in many ways. I remember her endless scrubbing to keep back the dirt in her small apartment (first floor, back), the enormous meals she conjured up whenever her brood chose to descend on her, but most of all I remember her amazing brown eyes. Often those eyes would catch us in the glare of all our sins, making us ashamed. We might go on tittering, deliberately, but in our hearts those brown eyes would stop us every time.

As with all rocks of her kind we felt free to lavish on her every kind of abuse, always confident that she would never break. When we visited her, our tormenting was checked only by the occasion, and by our parents who were trying, in spite of us, to act like proper

guests. We would come into those small dark rooms, into that faintly detergent odor of soap and dough, of damp newspaper and oiled leather. We would come rubbing the sacred little *mezuzah* on the doorframe without knowing why. Then, to our arrogant expectations, gifts of food would bloom everywhere. She would gorge us with stuffed *kishke*, soup with *knadleh*, *gefilte* fish, honey cake and strudel, an endless supply of *abhes*, the chick peas poured into our grubby hands from gallon jars, with seltzer or the marvellous cherry wine she used to make (we would hold the bottle up to the light, inspecting the warm red colors, and watch the rich dark dregs deepening slowly, like silt in a wine-colored sea). We would come and argue over who should get the chicken breast and who the dark-meat leg. We would crawl around the great braced legs of the dining table, scratching her furniture even as on top the old folks cracked nuts and ate raisins out of the great glass bowls. We would ruin her matches and toothpicks by trying to build houses on the necks of empty milk bottles. Only occasionally, when her pride in pleasing us was tested too far, would she signal us with her fierce brown eyes. For the most part, she left to our parents the job of pinching us or yanking us away from impending damage.

It was worse, I think, when we stayed with her (the family off on holidays or to the hospital). Then, in the morning, we would insist on combing her white-flax hair with the huge bone-colored comb, which was older than we were, and she would let us, even when it hurt her. In the morning, dressing us, she would tell us not to jump on the frail cots she had set up for us to sleep on, only to have us jump higher and higher, until the springs, threatening to give way, warned her to drag us off. Then she would stare down at us, her brown eyes boring right to the back of our impudent heads, while still we laughed.

I remember the unique way she had, in those days, of making her own cigarettes. She kept a supply of tobacco in a metal box tinted in lavender and stippled with gold, both very much faded by the time we ever set eyes on them. In another box she had a supply of empty cigarette papers tipped with cotton filters. She would press some tobacco into a small tin tube which cracked open down

the middle, tamp the tobacco with her thumb, then close it round again to shape the cigarette. With a small rammer, no bigger than an over-sized hatpin, she would push the tobacco into the paper, pack in the end, and settle back to smoke. Here, too, we had to disturb her peace. We would insist on holding the box up to our noses and sneezing from the pungent smell, or on filling the cigarettes for her, persistently ruining three at least for every one she could finally smoke. And then in a spray of tobacco, split paper, scatterings, we would go off bored to find something new to amuse us.

Even with things that must have meant more to her we couldn't leave her alone. Like the time she qualified for her citizenship papers. We had prodded her for years, had coached her on the name of the President, on the number of senators from each state, on the number of states in the Union, until finally she had managed to negotiate all the red tape and dry questions. They sent her a white sheepskin page with her picture on it (the only one she ever let anyone take) announcing in official script that she was now a citizen of these United States, first class. Proudly she showed the paper around, even hung it up for awhile in an old off-sized frame she'd picked up somewhere. But we had to squeal in laughter over "*bobbah's diploma*," and over the high seriousness of her picture, as if her brown eyes were staring not through glaring flood lamps into the camera, but deeply, into us. Until finally, deciding to take no more, she took down the parchment, and put it away in a drawer, to show thereafter only to those who asked for it respectfully.

When she was past seventy, our *bobbah* made the grand concession and took up English. Maybe she thought that would help her fathom some of our inscrutable American ways, I don't know. But I do remember the small notebook she bought, black, with white stippling, and a place to write your name. And the neatly beveled pencils, and the way she enrolled in the Adult Education Course in the big brownstone grade school just a few blocks away from her house. Here again she had to face the smothered hysteria of every smart aleck past the third grade. We condescended to help her with her homework, we even guided her hand as it tightly gripped the pencil, just as our teachers had guided ours. But only at the price

of endless comments about her childish scrawl, of high astonishment at her failures. Even as she argued that her native tongue had settled in her liver, and after seventy years was not to be so easily replaced, least of all by crazy English. Her triumphs, of course, we let slip by, unless, after many false starts, she would finally manage to write "whittle" like "whittle" and not like "uettee"—for then, with even less tact, we would all burst out into the most patronizing compliments. Still, two nights a week, for two long years, she risked our taunts by staying on at the Adult Education Course, until one day she quit without warning, as suddenly as she had begun, never again to write English, or even to speak it. She gave no reasons. Maybe it was because she had discovered by then that English had not taught her to know us any better, maybe because she realized she was getting on and now had better things to do. We never knew.

We went on tormenting her, complaining if the boiled milk she gave us had skin on it, or messing up the cache of small aids she had stored up over the years. We knew, or rather never doubted, that whatever we needed—pins, buttons, rubber bands, paper clips, bits of string—she could dig them out from the maze of drawers and boxes she kept in her bedroom. And we went on sticking our hands into those small and useful savings, mixing them around like paint, until we were brought up short by the reprimand in her eyes which drove us away, still giggling, to hide our guilt.

It was not long after, that we became interested in fires. We stole her matches, stood out on the stoop, and struck them against the rough stone to watch them flare. We went out on election eve and threw orange crates on the fires, helping to fan them up as high as the lampposts. We dug up fuel in alleys and lots as admission to the fires which other boys had built, and on cold November mornings knew the simple joy of warmth which we ourselves had made. Once we even gathered up fistfuls of tissue wrappings from grapefruits, the ones we sometimes used to make toy parachutes from by tying strings to each of the corners, and brought them home to start them burning in the bathtub. Not until we had watched a dozen tissue wrappings bloom from violet into flame, then char, did my

grandmother, smelling the smoke, descend on us to drive us from her house. It took her a full week to scrub the carbon stains from the tub's ruined enamel.

The end of our interest in fires came one bleak and raw December afternoon when we had brought two cartons "admission" to a fire. Feeding the fire slowly, I must have become hypnotized by the flame, because suddenly I was off balance, and coming down hands first. Among other things, a crate's hot wire in that burning debris leaped against my fingers. I went home crying, presented my raw, stinging hands to my grandmother, as if expecting her to dig up something from her cache of poor aids to soothe them. Instead, her fierce eyes froze, she put on her shawl, and led me, still whimpering, to a drug store down the block. There someone paid me half a dollar to sit still while the drugstore man smeared on a smelly yellow salve and bandaged up my hands. Then, using all the strength in her frail, tough bones, my grandmother carried me home and put me to bed. In the evening, she gave me hot milk and a slice of sweet *halvah* and didn't say a word. At last she had some peace.

Why? Why, I wondered, did she put up with us when every voice of authority either terrified or beat us down.

She never scolded me directly about that afternoon, but from time to time her brown eyes accused me, and that was worse, much worse. I never really heard the end of that fire. Her reproach lasted for years. And later, when I had fully recovered, and returned to tormenting her again, I was to catch a brief look at myself, as she must have seen me, when I stood before her one spring day, freshly back to the dark rooms from the afternoon outside, my eyes still blinking, my sneakers dirty, my pants torn, my T-shirt doused in the dust of a dozen city streets. I will never forget the way she looked down at me, shaking her head and sighing, "Aie, aie, aie, Amerika, Amerika."

I think the only things we actually respected in those days were her Sabbath and her prayers. On Friday nights we would control ourselves a little, or rather become persuaded by the hush, by the sweet, lingering smell of the afternoon's baking, and by the candles

blooming at sundown in the darkness of those rooms. When she draped her prayer shawl over her white hair, now golden in the candlelight, and whispered the Sabbath service, we would watch quietly from a distance. She would bury her face in her hands like sorrow itself and strangely we would feel it. We would stay quiet most of the evening, in that small kitchen, illumined only by the candles and the little night-light on her wall. On Saturdays, we would come back to the one night-light, the cold range, the candles sputtering and dying one by one in their zinc stems. We who had lost religion, or never found it, would turn on the lights and the gas so she could make us tea. Then she would let us finish up the honey cake, or feed us thick soup with rice and chunks of floating chicken, and afterwards we would leave for the Saturday movie, fortified for the weekly ordeals of Tarzan or Tailspin Tommy. Never once did I hear her insist on orthodoxy for any of her offspring. If that was one place where we let her be, the respect was wholly mutual. If we went our own ways, the loss was surely ours. There are no more Fridays now.

When at last our *babbah* lay dying, we could only be astonished that her fierceness had come to an end, that she would not, after all, go on forever. We found this out too late to make amends for our long account of cruelty. All we could do was try to make it up to her in small fumbling ways. On Mother's Day, while she still had all her faculties, we brought her a rose floated in a water glass, and she smiled, her eyes pleased and proud, but then something happened, the tumbler spilled, and we had to change her bedding. Once, during those last months, when she could still be propped up, she told me, in the baleful sorrow of her eyes, "No more work. No more shop. No more cook. Where are all my grandchildren?" And the resentment came, fighting invasions of helplessness, fighting the drain of power from her life-begotten members. But then, in utter defiance of what she knew must come, she woke up one morning calling for her clothes and shopping bag. Everyone tried to keep her still, to humor her, even as they had in the days of her English lessons. But she set them all back with her eyes,

saying darkly, "I've got to go shopping. Why all the fuss, why?" And she dragged herself up, wobbled a little, and held. She dressed, wound her hair severely as before, put on her high-laced shoes, her shiny blouse, her brown wool skirt, picked up her shopping bag, and went out. An aunt trailed at a safe distance, keeping her in sight, yet not daring to approach, until that aunt, nearly crazy with concern, was brought up short by the old lady waiting for her around a corner. My aunt lowered her eyes, as if she had suddenly violated a sacred hour.

"What are you doing here?" my grandmother said, furious and showing it. "Why do you follow me? *Goteniu!* For God's sake, go home! *Gehe aham!* All I want is to shop in peace!"

"So, can't I shop, too?" my aunt said meekly, not daring to look up, until finally she had turned and walked home, slowly and alone.

Later that morning, my grandmother had come home, carefully unloaded her groceries, and filed them away in the cupboard and the icebox. Then she slowly undressed and went back to bed. No one had helped her. A week later she died.

It seems that only after she was gone was her past opened up to us, the answer to the riddle of her patience. I remember the Saturday afternoon that my Aunt Clara, who enjoyed the anecdotal side of things, and my Uncle Mendy, who enjoyed hearing it, were sitting at the kitchen table drinking tea. I was doing something trivial in the front room, probably my geometry homework, or a charcoal sketch of my grandmother's glass fruit bowl—it had somehow ended up in our house after they'd disposed of her things.

"... and the time she was taking up with the smoking," my Aunt Clara was saying. "She was a devil. It wasn't bad enough to smoke at home—you know how it was in the old country—but no, she had to go walking down the middle of the street to let the whole world know. Just ask the *fettah*, he'll tell you. And then the women got jealous because all the men were looking at her—you know how beautiful she was. That's when they asked the rabbi to talk to her. So he talked to her. And after he talked to her, she said to him,

‘Where does it say in the law, *rebbenui*, that women are not allowed to smoke?’ So the rabbi said, ‘Sometimes goodness is not found in the law. The townspeople are angry. Isn’t that enough?’ And you know what she did? She laughed. She laughed right out loud and said to the rabbi, ‘*Rebbenui, rebbenui*, when goodness lies in tobacco, we will all go to hell.’ And she went right on smoking. Such a devil she was. Ask her brother, the *fettah*, he will tell you.”

I could imagine my Uncle Mendy nodding before he asked, “And what of Chaim? How was it when she took Chaim for a husband?” And it seemed that he was asking for an old story, one that he knew well but still loved to hear.

My Aunt Clara must have been sipping her tea because for a moment I could hear nothing but the slight sucking sound against the glass. Then she said, “It was less than two years after she married Abraham. One day they had a fight and she moved out—I tell you, when she got an idea in her head, wild horses couldn’t get it out—and she took me with her. I was only eleven months old at the time, so naturally I don’t remember, but ask the *fettah*, he remembers. It was bad enough moving out—you know how it is when you fight—but then it looked like she was going to *stay* moved out. You think it bothered her? It didn’t bother her—you know how stubborn she could get. This time, they got the *melamud*, the teacher, to go see her, not the rabbi. The rabbi didn’t stand so good after he failed with the smoking business. The *melamud* tried to be nice. ‘Lady, it’s time to go back, no?’ he said to her. ‘Mad you’ve been long enough.’ ‘Go back?’ she told him. ‘To who? For what? Next week I’m going to the city to see the magistrate. When I come back, Abraham will not be my husband any more.’ The *melamud* was shocked. The *fettah*, his friend, was such a good student in the yeshiva. How could he have a sister like this? ‘You will have your child grow up an orphan?’ the *melamud* pleaded with her. ‘Without a father she’ll grow up?’ So she told him—now listen—she told him, ‘I will marry Chaim, the carpenter. He has asked me. Clarakeh will have a father.’ Then the *melamud* wanted to know what was wrong with Abraham. So she spoke right up and said, ‘Abraham always shouts at me. If I drop a spoon, he shouts.’ ‘So for a

little shouting you break up a marriage? Who ever heard?" "It's not only that," she told him. "I don't care for Abraham anyway. My father made me marry him. I was too young to know my own mind; at that age you're too young. But now I love Chaim. He will not shout at me if I drop a spoon." Naturally, the *melamud* was losing his patience—she was enough to make anybody mad. "It's the devil's work to break up a marriage like this," he told her. But that didn't bother her. She stood right up to him, "It's the devil's work to give yourself to a man you don't love." They say he got embarrassed then and went away. You know, he was old and set in his ways and very religious. Besides, there was nobody in town she wouldn't stand up to. So what good was all his wisdom? Anyway, that's how she came to marry Chaim. Before half her sisters had one husband, she had two."

And as they spoke of her, I felt as if I were hearing, for the first time, about a new and delightful stranger. Later, my Aunt Clara said, our *babbah* had been reproached again by her *landsmen* for not forcing her children to go to the synagogue, where everyone else took theirs as a matter of course. My Uncle Mendy remembered that she was autocratic, even careless with her children, worked them hard or hired them out to bakers and saddlers for the few extra kopeks. "Prayer is optional," she would say, "work is not. You can't get prayer from a corpse. Let them learn." And when she picked up and followed some of her children to America, she left others behind to make their way as best they could. For all her toughness she was never known, in the new land, in the dark flat in Williamsburg, to miss a Sabbath or a holiday. Her prayer was a private, therefore honest, thing, working by example, not by precept. Her way was there to follow, but the choice was ours in the end.

My Aunt Clara went on to recall how, during Prohibition, while her grown children were staving off starvation with the most menial jobs, she was supporting herself by selling homemade *schnapps* and cherry wine.

"Such friends she had, you can't imagine," my Aunt Clara said sadly. "You know what someone told me? Some of the Gentiles—you know, the ones who used to come to her with troubles?—as

if she didn't have enough herself—on the day of the funeral, they lit candles for her in the church. How do you like that?"

"You don't say," said my Uncle Mendy, quietly sipping his tea. "You know, it will never be the same." I had never seen him so sad.

"No, it will never be the same," said my Aunt Clara, and then she sighed deeply, as if she had come at last to an acceptance beyond tears. When I heard that, I felt, over my forgotten doodling, that a mystery had been suddenly lifted. I knew what it was that had made her put up with our tormenting, that allowed her to suffer in silence the scratched furniture, ruined beds, charred bathtubs, our pulling that bone-colored comb through her white-flax hair, hurting her. She must have recognized, or still remembered, the face of that slightly perverse demon we were always turning toward her. The face she'd seen had been her own.

There were more people at her funeral than I could count. Only now, that pale lavender box with the pungent tobacco, that photo with the fierce proud eyes (which shows up unexpectedly in the wallets of aunts, cousins, uncles) become tokens of a total person. I feel increasingly that I missed something during all those years of damp and dark and fabulous food, of that soap-and-leather smell in the bathroom, of those newspapers which took our shoes while her washed floors were drying; something I never had, yet might have.

I think suddenly of that last week after her shopping trip, when she returned to bed for the last time. I remember the gradual softening of her movement, the difficult breathing, until, finally, they had to remove the false teeth she'd worn for twenty years to drop them forever into the heart of the night-glass tumbler. I remember the blue mouth sunken in around the gums, the fight for each last breath, and then I see again her eyes opening—for the very last time they ever opened—not in recognition, but in brightness, like the small fierce night-light she would keep alive on any Sabbath whatsoever.

Punctuation Remarks

RICHARD ARMOUR

“Even the commas are entertaining.”—*Cleveland Amory, in a blurb describing Nathaniel Benchley’s biography of Robert Benchley.*

Admiringly we must admit
This is the apogee of wit,
When commas (though it’s not made plain
Just how it’s done) can entertain.

It might perhaps be how absurd
They look, head bent behind a word
And tail tucked like a scolded dog’s,
These punctuation polliwogs.

But let us not neglect, while grinning
At clowning commas, squirming, chinning,
The semicolons, holding poses
Like seals, with balls upon their noses,

And dashes—dashing, lean, and narrow,
For bow-parentheses an arrow,
And lynx-eyed colons, coldly peering,
And quotes, cheerleaders jumping, cheering,

And question marks, small shepherd crooks
That bring a rustic touch to books,
Each balanced on a small black ball . . .
What fun! Why read the words at all?

THE AUTHORS

(Continued from page 299)

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("The Great Descent: A Version of Fenimore Cooper") is assistant professor in the social sciences at The College, University of Chicago. "The Great Descent" is adapted from the manuscript of his forthcoming book *The Jacksonian Persuasion*. During the year 1955-56 Mr. Meyers was a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford.

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(“The Pretty Surprise”), a graduate of the University of Michigan, is a former teacher of Indian children in New Mexico. She has also done graduate work at Stanford in creative writing and English literature, and now lives in San Francisco with her husband and baby daughter.

A. E. COPPARD

(“Father Raven”) writes us that he had to leave school when he was nine years old and worked “at all sorts of things” until All Fools Day, 1919, when he took the plunge into letters. He has lived meagerly on literature ever since, he says, without regrets. Altogether he has published 15 volumes of short stories and 3 volumes of poems.

MARY NASH

(“The Even Temperature in the Cave”) graduated from Radcliffe College, where she majored in English. Her first story was published in *The New Yorker*; this is her second; and a third will appear shortly in *The New Yorker*. She lives with her husband and three children in

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GEORGE BLUESTONE

(“No More Fridays”) tries, he writes us, to live the ambidextrous life of critic and writer. He is an *Atlantic* “first” prize winner, and has twice received honorable mention in the Martha Foley collections. Fragments of his dissertation—a critical study of film versions of the novel—will be appearing this autumn in the *Sewanee Review*, *Quarterly of Film, Radio & TV*, and *Carleton Drama Review*.

RICHARD ARMOUR

(“Punctuation Remarks”) is one of our most loyal contributors. The many readers of *It All Started with Europa* will be delighted to learn that his latest book, *It All Started with Eve*, is scheduled for publication this autumn. Mr. Armour describes this as “an uninhibited account of famous women of history—a series of thumbnail, or hangnail, biographies.”

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